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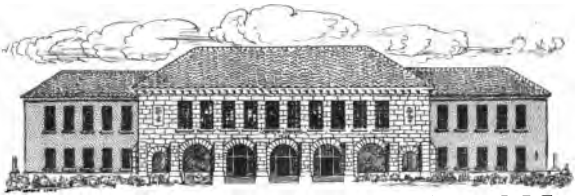
PETER AND POLLY
IN SPRING

ROSE B. LUCIA



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PETER AND POLLY IN SPRING

BY

ROSE LUCIA

PRINCIPAL OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL
MONTPELIER, VERMONT
AUTHOR OF
"PETER AND POLLY IN SUMMER"
"PETER AND POLLY IN WINTER"

AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY
NEW YORK CINCINNATI CHICAGO

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PETER AND POLLY IN SPRING.
E. P. I

To

A. B.

WITH THE ACCUMULATED AFFECTION

OF THE YEARS

". . . All the living staircase of the spring, step by step, upwards to the great gallery of the summer — let me watch the same succession year by year."

— Richard Jefferies.

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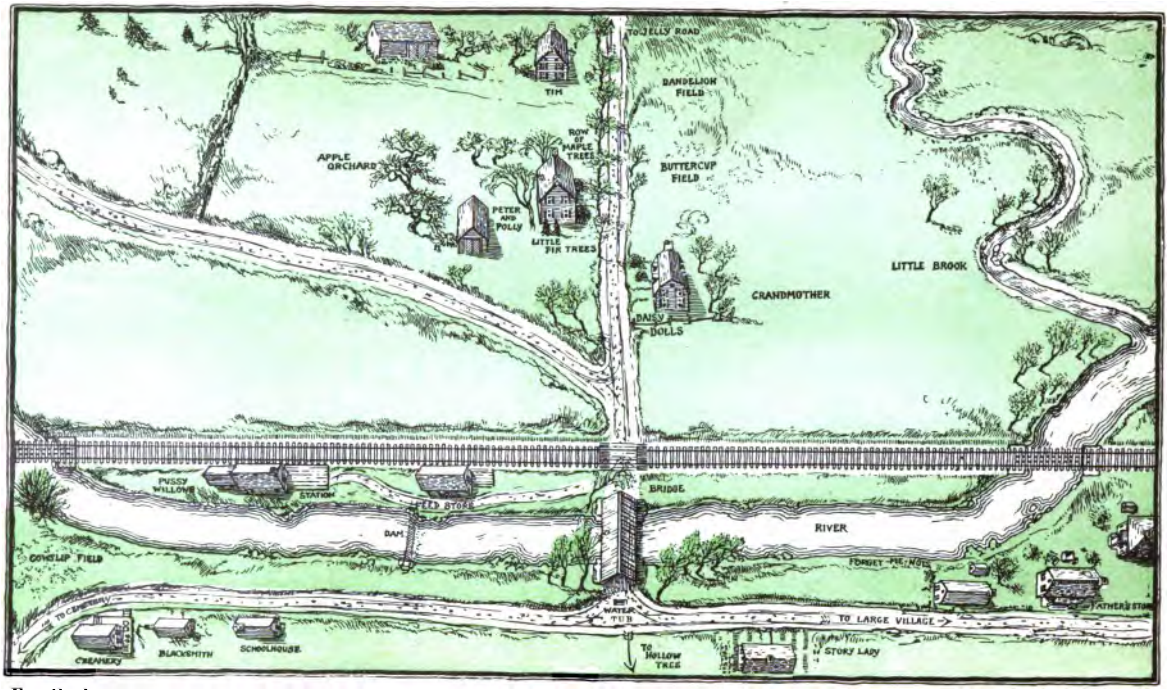


Frontispiece

MAP

PETER AND POLLY IN SPRING

PETER AND POLLY

This book is about Polly Howe when she was eight years old. It is about her brother Peter, too.

It is about Wag-wag. He is Peter's dog. And about Brownie. She is a pony. Then there is Tim, a little boy who lives near Peter. Tim's dog is named Collie.

Look at the map in the front of this book. It will show you where all these people live.

Do you wish to know what Peter and Polly play? If you do, you must read these stories.

Peter and Polly live in the country. There are no tall buildings near their house. There are no crowded streets in their village.

But there are many trees along the streets. There are large fields near the houses. And there are hills all around.

In the spring the fields are yellow with buttercups. In the summer they are green with tall grass. In the winter they are white with snow.

It is very, very cold in the winter. The snow is deep. Sometimes it covers the fences.

Peter and Polly like to play in the snow. They like to build snow forts and to make snow men.

But Polly is glad when the snow melts. She knows that spring is coming. She watches for the first birds to come back. She looks for the first flowers.

One day she said to father, "I have a hole in my rubber boots."

"That will not do," said father. "We must mend it, if we can. If we cannot, you must have a new pair.

"It is nearly spring. Soon the roads and the sidewalks will be wet."

"Yes," said Polly. "All the snowflakes will turn into water fairies again. Then they will run away to their homes in the brook.

"We can go fishing and wading. We shall not have to put on so many clothes. I shall be glad of that.

"Peter likes winter best. But I like spring and summer."

"Sugaring comes in the spring," said Peter. "I like that. May we tap our maple trees, father?"

"Yes," said father. "I think this will be a good sugar year. Perhaps you can make enough sugar to keep you sweet for a long time. You may try."

THE DOG ON THE ICE CAKE

One morning father called, "Wake up, Polly! Wake up!"

"I am awake, father," said Polly. "Why?"

"The ice on the river is breaking. After breakfast we will go down and watch it."

"Oh, goody, goody!" cried Polly.

Peter said, "Then we can't skate any more."

"We have not skated for a long time, Peter. I am glad that the ice is breaking. It cannot be spring with ice on the river. And I must have it spring soon."

After breakfast, father said, "Now we will go and stand on the bridge. The water is taking the ice down the river. We will watch the cakes."

"What a noise the water makes, father," said Polly. "See, there is a big cake of ice coming over the dam. And there is another and another."

"Yes," said father. "They are coming fast now. The ice above the dam is all broken into cakes. Those will soon be gone. Then the ice from up the river will come."

"The water is high," said Polly. "Last spring it was just like this. I remember it."

"Watch," said father. "Can you see anything besides the ice?"

"Look, look!" cried Peter. "On that big cake! I can see a barrel. And there is a box."

"I see some logs. They are floating in the water," said Polly.

"There is part of an old sleigh," said Peter.

"Now let's walk up the river above the dam, children," said father. "The water was over the road in one place. It brought big cakes of ice nearly to the road."

"Is that up by the cowslip field?" asked Polly.

"Yes," said father. "And your cowslip

field is full of ice cakes. They are floating around in the water that was left by the river."

Just then some one shouted, "There's a dog! There's a dog! He's on an ice cake!"

Peter and Polly looked. Yes, there was a small black puppy. He was on a large cake of ice. He was floating down the river toward the dam.

"That will never do," cried Mr. Howe. "He must not go over the dam."

Mr. Howe ran to the bank of the river. He called to the dog. He whistled to him.

The dog heard. He ran all around the

edge of the ice cake. He looked at the water. He almost jumped in. Then he turned back.

"Come, come, old fellow," called Mr. Howe. "Come here, sir, come here."

Again the dog ran around the ice cake. He wished to jump into the water. But he did not dare.

"O father, get him," cried Polly. "He'll be killed, if he goes over the dam."

Just then the ice cake came nearer the shore. It moved very slowly for a minute.

"Now, old fellow, come here," called Mr. Howe. And he snapped his fingers and whistled again.

Then the dog made up his mind to jump. Down he went into the cold water. In a minute more he was near the bank. Mr. Howe stepped into the river to pull him out.

"Lucky dog," he said. "You almost went over the dam. Here, children, take him home quickly. You must let him dry by the kitchen stove. Keep it hot.

"To-morrow he may come with me to the store. Some one will see him who knows where he belongs."

THE ICE-CAKE SHIPS

The next day father and Peter and Polly took the strange dog to the store. But he did not wish to stay there. He wished to follow Peter and Polly.

When they left the store, he whined and whined. He scratched at the door, too.

"Do you really wish to go, old fellow?" asked Mr. Howe. "You are nothing but a puppy, anyway. Of course you would like to play with the children."

He opened the door and called to them.

Out rushed the dog. He jumped around Polly and barked. He took her hand in his mouth and pulled her along. He tried to show her how glad he was to be with her.

"It's all right," said father. "I think he may go with you. Just keep an eye on him. Good-by."

"What shall we do?" asked Peter.

"Let's go up the road," said Polly. "Let's see if the ice cakes are still in the cowslip field. Shall we?"

Soon they came to the field. Yes, there were the ice cakes. There were many of them. Some were large, some were small.

The water had gone down and left them in the field.

"Will they stay all summer?" asked Peter. "If they do, we can get our ice right here. That will be nice."

"Of course they won't, Peter. They will melt by and by.

"Little doggie, did you like your sail on the ice cake? Do you wish to try it again? Come up on this one with me. We will play that we are sailing down the river."

"I wish that Wag-wag were here," said Peter. "Then I should have a dog to go sailing with me. This is my ship. It is bigger than yours."

Peter's ship was a very large cake of ice. It had tipped up on its side against another cake.

It was slippery. Peter had to try many times before he could climb to the top.

Then he called, "Look at me, Polly! Look at me!" And he sat down and slid to the bottom of the cake.

"I am going to find one to slide on, too,"

said Polly. And she walked about among the ice cakes.

All at once she shouted, "Come here, Peter. Come here quickly. Here are some ships really in the water! What fun if we can get on them!"

In the lowest part of the field there was a small pool of water. In the water were two ice cakes.

Peter waded into the water. It was not deep. He climbed up on one cake. He slipped as he climbed. But he did not slip into the water.

"See me, see me!" he called. "Come on the other one, Polly. It is fun."

"I will," said Polly. "But first I shall get a stick. We can poke with it. Then we can play that we are really sailing around."

Soon she found a stick. Then she waded to the other cake. She put one end of her long stick on the bottom of the pool. She pushed with it.

She was almost sure that her cake moved a little. It was great fun.

The puppy did not think it fun. He wished to sail, too. So, at last, he waded out to Polly's cake. She pulled him up on

it. He shook himself. Then he sat down. By and by he began to shiver.

"Oh, dear," Polly said to him, "are you cold? Why did you go into the water?

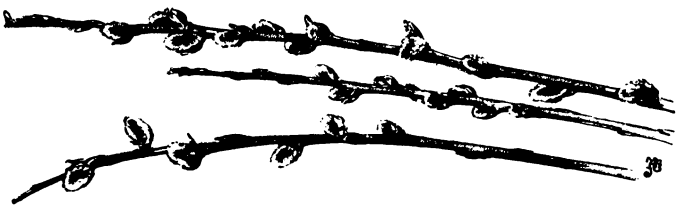
"Now I must take you home. You must be warm and dry. Why don't you wear rubber boots, too? Then you could wade in the water."

"I don't wish to go home," said Peter. "You go."

"Oh, please do, Peter," said Polly. "We can come back this afternoon."

When they went back, what do you think they found?

The water had gone from the pool. The ice-cake ships were fast in the mud.



PUSSY WILLOWS

"I had some fun in school to-day," said Polly. "I am going to show Peter what it was, mother. It was about pussy willows."

"Are pussy willows out yet?" asked mother. "It seems very early."

"Oh, yes," said Polly. "We have had many in school. I know where to get large ones.

"Peter and I will go for some now. We will go down by the skating place."

Soon the children were back with many pussy willows. They were gray, furry things. They were as soft as little kittens.

"Shall we put them into water?" asked mother. "If we do, they will keep fresh longer.

"Perhaps the pussies will grow up into cats. Perhaps leaves will come out, too."

"They are really cats now, mother.

Didn't you know? My teacher says that they are willow catkins.

"And I know that they will lose their fur by and by. I know that they will grow bigger. They will hang down like tassels."

"Well," said Peter, "what are you going to show me? I do not care what the pussy willows will be by and by."

Polly said, "I will keep these two sticks, mother. We can put the rest into water.

"Now, Peter, let's get our little table. Now get some paper, and pencils, and paste."

"What for?" asked Peter.

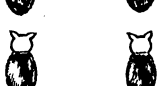
"I am going to show you how to make these pussy willows into cats. I am going to make the cats sit upon a fence."

"How can you?" asked Peter. "You haven't any fence."

"I am going to make one, of course. I shall draw it. But first I must make the cats."

She took two pussy willows. She pasted them on the paper like this:

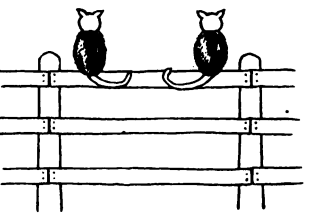
She drew a head on each like this:



After that she drew two tails. The pussy willows then looked like this:

"Now," said Polly, "they cannot sit in the air. I must make that fence. In a minute you will see them sitting on it."

And she drew the fence so that it looked like this:



"There are my pussy willows," she said. "You see that they have turned into cats. You see that they are sitting on a fence, too."

"I wish to do it," said Peter. "See, mother. Can you make them?"

"Perhaps I can," said mother. "But you try now. If you children will make five good ones, we will have a party. We will invite grandmother to supper."

"May the cats come to the party, too?" asked Peter.

"Oh, yes, Peter. Put a cat at each place at the table. Put our names on our cats.

"I will tell you how to spell 'grandmother,' if you do not know, Polly. Now get to work, or it will be too late to invite her."

TAPPING THE MAPLE TREES

Peter and Polly live on a hill. Their house is white. Their barn is red. Around their house there is a large field. This is Mr. Howe's hayfield.

In front of this hayfield there is a row of maple trees. The row goes as far as Tim's house.

One morning father said, "Should you like to tap your trees to-day? I think that the sap might run. The trees are in a warm place."

"Oh, yes, yes!" cried Peter and Polly.

"Very well, then. I have plenty of spouts but not enough pails. We will tap as many trees as we have pails. Come on."

He took an auger and went to the first tree. He bored a hole in the trunk. He pounded a spout into the hole. Then he hung the pail on the tree.

The sap would run out of the tree where the hole had been bored. It would run through the spout. Then it would drop into the pail.

Peter and Polly had seen trees tapped before. It did not seem strange to them.

"Father," said Polly, "why won't the sap run in the winter?"

"Most of it is in the roots then, Polly. It is the warm spring sun that makes it go up into the branches.

"There it will swell the buds. It will make them grow into flowers and leaves. But, when it comes to the holes, some sap runs into our pails."

"Then the buds will not have so much," said Polly. "Won't it hurt them, father?"

"We think not. Here is the last pail. Now I must go to the store."

"There is Tim," said Peter. "Tim, come here. See what we are doing."

"Tapping trees," said Tim. "I wish I had some to tap. I asked my father to do it for me. But he would not."

"My father will," said Peter. "Show him where."

"In front of my house," said Tim.

"But some of those are elms," said Polly. "You cannot make maple sugar from those."

"There are maple trees, too, Polly."

"So there are, Tim," said Mr. Howe.

"But they are not sugar maples. They are soft maples. We do not make sugar from them."

"That is what my father said, too. And so he would not tap any for me. He is going to tap all our maple trees on the hill to-morrow. I shall go with him."

Mr. Howe said, "I'll tell you what, Tim. I'll tap the rest of our trees for you. Ask your mother for a few pails. I have no more."

"Oh, will you?" cried Tim. "Then I can have some trees near home, too. I am glad."

Mr. Howe tapped the trees. Then he went to his store.

Tim ran to his house. "O mother," he called, "Peter's father has given me some maple trees. I need buckets for the sap."

"That is too bad, Tim," said his mother. "Your father has taken every bucket that we have. He has taken them up on the hill. They are in the sugarhouse."

"But I must have some, mother. The trees are all tapped. The sap will leak down on the ground. Oh, what shall I do?"

"Here, Tim, why not use these little wooden tubs? Nothing but butter has been in them. I will scald them out for you."

The children took the tubs to the trees as fast as they were scalded.

Peter said, "We cannot hang these on the trees, Tim."

"That is no matter, Tim," said Polly. "We will set them down in the snow. The sap will drip into them just the same.

"Let's all come out after dinner and look into the pails. If the sap really runs, we can gather it."

SALTED MAPLE SUGAR

The sap did not run much that day. But the next day it began to drip, drip, drip.

"It looks like yellow water," said Peter. "Let's all have some to drink."

"I do not like it very much," said Polly. "It is too sweet. I like water without any sugar."

But Peter and Tim thought it was good.

"Let's take it up to my house," said Tim. "We can boil it there."

Polly said, "Then we shall have to carry it uphill, Tim. That is hard. Let's take it all to our house. Mother will show us just how to do it."

"All right," said Tim. "We will boil mine with yours."

Mrs. Howe gave the children a large iron kettle.

She said, "There is not yet enough sap

to boil. We will begin when this kettle is full and there is more in the pails."

By another day there was enough sap. Then the boiling began.

"Why does it turn into sugar?" asked Tim.

"It does not exactly turn into sugar, Tim," said Mrs. Howe. "The sugar is there all the time. But it is mixed with water.

"When the sap boils, the water goes away in steam. Then the sugar is left."

"Yes," said Polly, "and the longer it boils the more water goes away. So the sugar gets thicker and thicker.

"Let's have ours sirup, mother, not hard sugar."

"Very well," said mother. "You may pour in more sap now, children. The kettle will hold more, you see. This sap has boiled down."

"Will it be good to put on snow soon?" asked Tim.

"We shall not make the sirup thick enough for that," said Polly.

"Oh, dear," said Tim. "I should like sugar on snow."

"Your father said that we might have sugar on snow up at his sugarhouse, Tim. Won't that be more fun?"

"Yes," said Tim. "Then I can take this sirup home. I can show it to my mother."

It took many hours for the sap to boil down to sirup. At last it grew thicker and thicker. Bedtime came before it was done.

"I will finish this for you," said Mrs. Howe. "Tim, come down and get your share in the morning."

When Peter awoke the next morning, he thought of the sugar.

"Let's go down and taste it," he called to Polly.

"O Peter, I am not dressed yet. Besides, let's wait for Tim," said Polly.

They did not have to wait long. Soon Tim was at the house.

"How is the sugar?" he called. "How is the sugar?"

"Here is a little in a cup for each of you," said mother. "There is quite a large jar full of sirup. I hope that it is good. I have not tasted it."

Polly and Tim and Peter each took a spoonful.

"Oh," said Polly, making up a face. "How horrid!"

"Mine isn't good," said Peter.

"I do not like mine," said Tim.

"What is the matter?" asked mother. "Are you joking?"

"No, mother," said Polly. "It tastes as if it had salt in it. Has it? You taste and see."

Mother did.

Then she said, "It is horrid. It certainly

has salt in it. But where did it come from? Let me think.

"Tim, what was in those tubs that you used for sap?"

"Butter was, once. But my mother scalded them."

"Then that is it," said mother. "The salt from the butter got into the wood. The sap soaked it out.

"The salt could not go off in steam, so it stayed in the sirup. Never mind. We will get some other pails. Then we will boil more sap."

"I do not care, mother," said Polly. "I think that it is funny. Who ever heard of salted maple sugar?

"Come on, Tim, and take some up to your mother. She will laugh, too."

THE FIRST BLUEBIRDS

One morning father said, "Will you go driving with me, children?"

"Yes, yes, father!" they both shouted. "Where are you going? Tell us fast!"

"I will tell you," said father. "Listen.

"First we are going down the hill. We shall pass our store. We shall keep straight on for about two miles. What shall we see then?"

"Farmer Brown's, Farmer Brown's," cried Polly. "Are you going there? Oh, goody, goody!"

"Do not jump up and down yet," said Mr. Howe. "I shall not stop there. You may, if you wish. But I am going more than two miles farther."

"Oh, that is to Large Village," said Polly. "I should like to go there, too. I

am so glad that now I shall jump up and down. See me!"

"May we drive, father?" asked Peter.

"I think so. But not all the way. The road is getting bad in places. The sleighing will soon be very poor. Be ready when I have harnessed Mary."

They passed father's store. They drove down a long hill. Then the road followed the river. It ran among thick trees.

"This is where there were so many chickadees in the winter," said Polly. "Do you suppose any of them came to our bird baskets? There is one now."

"So there is," said father. "It is almost time for the summer birds to come back."

"I heard crows the other day," said Polly. "They said, 'Caw, caw.' That isn't a pretty song. Is it?"

"It is the very best song that they know," replied father.

"One of Tim's men has a pet crow," said Peter. "He says that he is going to teach it to talk. Can he, father?"

"Isn't a crow talking when it says, 'Caw'? Perhaps the man meant that, Peter."

"Oh, then it was a joke, father. I hoped that the crow would really talk."

"Listen to that noise, Polly. Do you hear it?" asked father.

"I hear the wind in the cedar trees. I hear the river, too."

"No," said father. "Listen again."

"Yes," cried Polly. "I hear it! I hear it! It is a woodpecker. He is tapping with his bill. I have heard him many times.

"I wish to hear other birds now. How I should like to hear a bluebird or a robin this very day!"

"So should I," said father. "And see them, too. But it is a little early yet."

"There is Farmer Brown's," said Peter. "That is where a deer came down from the hill, one day. I wish that I could see one now."

"You thought it was a cow, Peter. You didn't know much, did you? Oh, there is Mrs. Brown."

"Aren't you going to stop?" called Mrs. Brown.

"I am afraid not, to-day, thank you," said Mr. Howe.

And Polly called, "We are going to Large Village. We are looking for bluebirds and robins."

"I hope that you will see some," said Mrs. Brown. "I should like to myself. Good-by." And on they went.

"This is the very place to see them," said Polly. "Once before, I saw them first here. I am going to look hard."

But it was father who watched hard.

Soon he said, "I do believe you are

right. Look, Polly! What is that on the fence?"

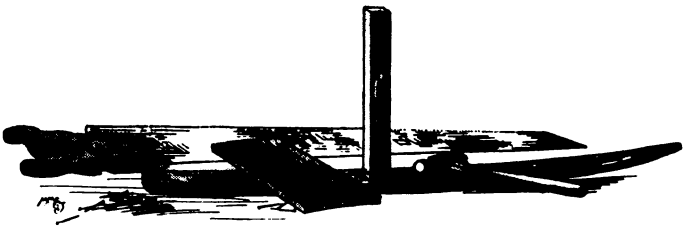
"Oh, yes, yes!" cried Polly. "It is a bluebird! It is! I see its blue back. And there is another and another."

"I hear one sing," said Peter. "It sounds prettier than a crow's song."

"See the lovely color on their breasts, Polly," said father. "I really am surprised. I never saw bluebirds quite so early before."

"We have seen them, haven't we, father? I am so glad. We will look for robins next," said Polly. "I hope it will not be cold any more. What would my poor bluebirds do?

"Perhaps we can see them again as we go home. Anyway we can stop and tell Mrs. Brown about them."



PETER'S JUMPER

"Well, Polly," said father, "you will have your wish soon."

"Which wish?" asked Polly.

"Have you more than one, Polly?"

"Yes, father. But the biggest is about the snow. I wish it to go. I can hardly wait."

"Then I have good news for you, Polly. The snow is going fast. The rain yesterday took much away."

"But, father, it froze last night. It isn't wet any more. It is all icy. That is too bad."

"The sun will melt the ice. Look at your sliding place in the field."

"Bare ground! Bare ground!" shouted Polly. "I can see it! I can see it!"

"So can I," said Peter. "And I am not so glad as you. I like to slide."

"Then let's go out and slide," said Polly. "Let's go before the sun melts the ice. I will use my jumper, not my sled."

"I haven't any jumper, Polly, and you know that. What shall I use?"

"You may take mine half the time, Peter."

"You know that I cannot, Polly. You know that my legs are not long enough."

"Then let's make you a jumper. Maybe father will. Will you, father?"

"I will help," said father. "But I think that you can make most of it yourself."

"I can," said Polly. "I made our snow-shoes, you know. I must have a barrel stave for this, too.

"I must have a little post. Then I must have a little board. It will be the seat.

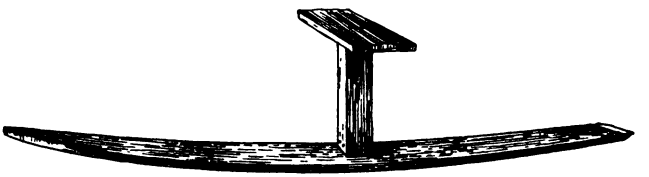
"The boys make jumpers that way. I have seen them. Sometimes they call them 'scooters.'"

Polly found the barrel stave and the small board. Father sawed a short piece of post for her.

Then he showed her where to nail the barrel stave to the post. After that she nailed the board to the post.

Father put in a few extra nails. He made

the front of the stave rounding. The jumper then looked like this:



"Let me sit on it," said Peter. "Yes, that is just high enough. Oh, thank you, thank you."

"Your scooter needs a brace to make it strong," said father. "If it breaks, never mind. You shall have another next winter."

"I will make my legs grow fast," said Peter. "Then I can have one like Polly's."

The children took their jumpers into the hayfield. Polly had made a track for hers on a hill. This track was now all ice.

They started halfway up the hill. Polly slid to the bottom nicely. Peter was spilled. But he did not care. It was fun anyway.

At last Polly started from quite near the top. But the slide was too icy. She could not keep her balance. She was spilled, too.

"I have slid enough now," said Peter. "I do not care how soon spring comes. I am going up to play with Tim."

"Then let me have your scooter, Peter."

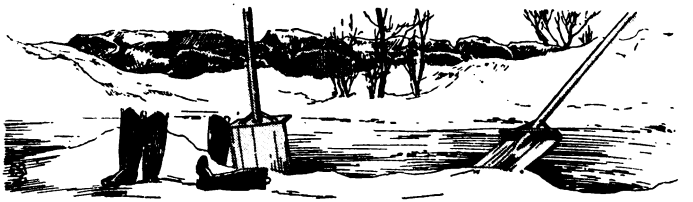
"All right, Polly. Let's see you slide."

Polly started. But her legs were too long. She did not get on very well. Then all of a sudden the jumper broke. Down Polly came on the icy hill.

How Peter laughed to see her slide the rest of the way sitting on the ice!

"Oh, I am sorry, Peter. I will fix your jumper," said Polly.

"But I do not care, Polly. I do not need the jumper. The snow is melting. We shall not slide any more. Now I am going to play with Tim."



HOW PETER AND POLLY PLAYED NEVER-STILL

"I wish spring would hurry," said Polly. "I want to see the green grass."

"It is coming as fast as it can," said father.

"Then I wish it could come faster. I wish the snow could all melt in one day."

"That would make too much water, Polly. There would be a flood. It is better to have the snow melt slowly.

"Why don't you and Peter dig ditches so that the water can run out of the yard?

"You can turn it all into one big brook. You can make this run at the side of the road.

"When I was a boy, we did that in the spring. Then we made dams of snow across our brooks."

"Oh, that is what we will do, Peter. Let's go out now," cried Polly. "I will

put on my new rubber boots. You get the snow shovels.

"Let's play that we are Never-still. He liked to see the brooks run. And he ran beside them, too."

So the children went out of doors. The warm sun was shining. It was melting the ice and the snow.

In many places one could see the brown earth. One could smell it, too.

Polly clapped her hands. "O Peter!" she cried. "See how fast the snow is going. Come on and play in the water."

So they began to build a brook. With their shovels they scraped the soft snow. Soon it looked like two banks of a brook.

Between these banks the water ran. It seemed glad of such an easy way to get downhill.

"Now," said Polly, "we will build more brooks. They will all run into this one. That will make this one larger.

"Then we will take this big brook down by the side of the road. We will make it go past grandmother's house.

"It will run down the hill. Maybe it will find the real river."

"When can we make a dam?" asked Peter. "I should like to do that now."

"Then let's do it now. Here is a good place."

So, across the brook, the children built a dam. They built it of snow. They packed the snow hard.

"The water cannot get through that," said Peter. "Oh, see it spread out. It will make a pond. Now we are the fairies who kept the brooks locked up in the ponds."

"Look out, Peter," cried Polly. "It is running around the end of the dam. Hurry and make that longer. The water will get away if you do not."

Peter put more snow on the dam. Then he waded in the pond. The water was nearly up to the tops of his rubber boots.

Polly said, "Do be careful, Peter. You will get in over the tops. Then you will be wet. You will have to go home to dry.

"Let's get some twigs now. We will play that they are boats. We will put them in the pond.

"Then you may be Never-still. You may break the dam. We will sail the boats down to grandmother's house."

"All right," said Peter. "Here are lots of boats. Now shall I break the dam?"

"Yes, now," said Polly.

Peter scraped a hole through the bank of snow. Away the water ran down the road. Away the boats floated, too.

And after them ran Peter and Polly. They splashed through the wet road. They covered themselves with wet snow.

Soon they were at grandmother's. Grandmother came out on the piazza.

She said, "How wet you are, children! What are you playing?"

"We were playing dams," said Polly. "Then we played Never-still. He was a fairy. He let the brooks run down the hills. The other fairies kept them locked up.

"We let them run, as Never-still did. Isn't that a good game, grandmother?"

"A fine game, Polly. It is the time of year for brooks to begin to run. And for children, too, it seems. So run home now, and put on dry clothes."

"Brooks cannot run uphill, grandmother," said Polly.

"But children can, and fast, too. Try it and see," said grandmother. "Good-by."

POLLY'S ROBIN

One morning Polly awoke early. She felt as if something special had waked her. She sat up in bed.

"Oh, dear," she said to herself, "I am too early. No one is up yet. I must go to sleep once more. Why did I wake?"

She lay back on her pillow. She closed her eyes. Then she heard a sound out of doors. It made her sit up again very quickly.

Could it be? Polly looked out of the open window. Yes, it was! It really was!

There in a tree, not far from Polly's window, sat a plump robin redbreast!

He seemed to be looking straight at Polly. She jumped out of bed and ran to the window. Robin redbreast opened his yellow bill and sang a few notes.

"O robin!" said Polly. "You must

have waked me. I am so glad to hear you sing. I like you better than bluebirds. I like you best of all the birds.

"And I know a verse about you. It is this:

"A birdie with a yellow bill
Hopped upon the window sill,
Cocked his shining eye and said:
'Ain't you 'shamed, you sleepy head!'"

Then the robin opened his yellow bill again. He sang, "Cheer up, cheerily; cheerily, cheer up."

"I do cheer up," said Polly. "You have come back from the South. It is really spring. Soon the grass will be green. Soon I shall go for mayflowers.

"Will you wait until I get dressed? Perhaps I can give you some breakfast."

Polly dressed very fast. She went downstairs. She put on her coat. Then she ran out of doors. Was the robin still there? Had she lost him? Oh, had he gone?

She looked around. The sun was shining bright but the air was cold. In many places the snow had melted.

"It smells like spring," said Polly.

"That is what father says. But where did my robin go? He might have waited for me."

"Cheer up, cheerily; cheerily, cheer up," sang the robin.

"Oh, I will," said Polly. "I see you now. You are in the tree where we tie the bones. You are pecking at one. Is there any breakfast on it for you, robin?"

Just then the robin hopped to another bone. On his way, he stopped to look into a little basket.

This was tied to a branch of the tree. All winter it had held seeds for the birds.

"Why," said Polly, "you know just where to go and what to do. Have you been here before?

"You aren't my robin who stayed a month with me last winter, are you? You can't be my robin, can you? Oh, I wish I knew! I wish I knew!"

But the robin could not tell her. He could only tell her to "Cheer up."

She looked at his fine spring clothes. His breast looked much brighter than the breast of her winter robin. He was plumper, too.

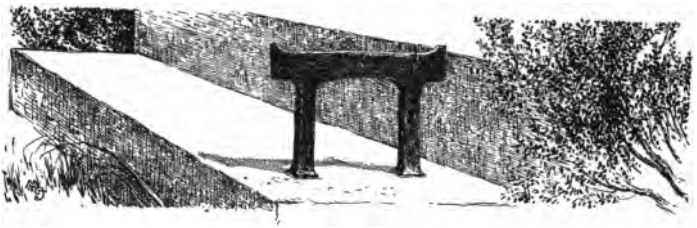
"I do not believe that you flew far South," said Polly. "I do not believe that you had far to fly back. You are so round and fat. Wouldn't you like a nice angleworm now?

"I wish Mrs. Robin would build her nest in our little fir trees. Then I could see her babies.

"But where is Mrs. Robin? Have you left her South? Bring her to breakfast as soon as she comes.

"I shall like you best of all the robins because I saw you first. And I do believe you are my winter friend."

The robin sang, "Cheer up, cheerily; cheerily, cheer up," as loudly as he could. Then he flew away.



STICK-IN-THE-MUD

"Now," said mother, "we must expect mud. After the ice has gone from the river and most of the snow from the roads and fields, there is always mud.

"Will you try to do something for me, children? Remember to scrape the mud from your shoes. Do it always before you come into the house."

"I will try, mother," said Polly.

"And I will try, mother," said Peter.

"You cannot take Brownie out for some time," said father. "But you may play with her in the barn."

"Why can't we?" asked Peter.

"Because Brownie might sink deep down in the mud. How could you pull her out?"

"Would she sink way to the other side of the world?" asked Peter.

"Oh, I think she would stop before she

went as far as that, Peter. But she might get into a very soft spot.

"Then she would be quite muddy. It would be hard to clean her. So we will not drive her for a few days."

"We do not care," said Polly. "We will walk instead."

"Do not walk into the mud, if you can help it," said father. "It is hard to clean you, too."

That afternoon Peter was playing in the yard. He was playing with Wag-wag.

Mother called to him. She said, "Peter, are you big enough to do an errand? I must have some buttermilk. Can you bring it home in this pail?"

"I think so," said Peter. "Wag-wag can help. Good-by."

He crossed the road carefully. The sidewalk was not muddy. He went down the hill past grandmother's.

He came to the railroad tracks. He watched for trains. Polly and he always did this.

On the bridge he stopped. He climbed up and looked over the railing. The water was still high. It splashed on the rocks.

It made a roaring sound coming over the dam. But Peter could not watch the water long. So on he went.

At the creamery he said, "Have you any buttermilk for me to-day?"

"Plenty," said the creamery man. "Give me your pail. Now, if you spill this, as you did in the winter, come back for more."

"Thank you," said Peter. "But I am not driving Brownie to-day. So I cannot tip over."

The man said, "Good-by," and Peter started. He carried his pail carefully.

The river flowed quite near the road.

When he had gone a few steps, he began to watch it. He saw something swimming close to the bank. Was it a muskrat?

"Oh, what is that?" said Peter to himself. "I must see! I must see!"

He stepped into the road. It was muddy. But he did not think of that. He did not even look where he was walking. He was watching the muskrat.

All at once his foot stuck. He pulled it out. Then he looked down. His rubber was fast in the mud.

He said to himself, "I must not spill my buttermilk."

So he set the pail in the road. He took hold of the rubber and pulled that out. But now the foot with the rubber on was deep in the mud.

He took one step and lost this other rubber. He was in one of those soft, wet places. He sank deeper and deeper.

Just then the creamery man came along. He was going to supper.

"Why, Peter," he said, "aren't you home yet? What is the matter?"

"No," said Peter, "I am not home. I think I am going to China instead. Will you please pull me out?"

"Stuck in the mud, are you? Yes, I will pull you out. There you are, and your rubbers, and your pail. You will need cleaning.

"You were a good boy not to cry. Now I have a new name for you. It is Stick-in-the-mud."

"I do not care," said Peter. "You helped me out, so you may call me that. I am sorry that I did not see what was in the water. But I did not spill my buttermilk, anyway."

MAYFLOWERING

At last the snow was gone. All the hills were bare and brown. The mud was drying in the roads.

Near the house the grass was very green.

Then Polly said, "To-day I am going mayflowering. I am going up in the woods on the hill."

"I shall go, too," said Peter.

"All right, Peter. And let's see if the Story Lady will go with us."

The Story Lady lived across the bridge. She was a friend of Peter's and Polly's. It was fun to play with her. She knew stories about everything.

Peter and Polly ran to her house.

"Will you go mayflowering with us, please?" called Polly. "Oh, will you go?"

"Where?" asked the Story Lady.

"Up on the hill back of your house," said

Polly. "It is time for mayflowers. I have seen some."

"Yes, I will. What kind shall we find?"

"Hepaticas," said Polly. "I know an early place. There are white ones and pink ones and dark blue ones."

Up the hill the three went. Peter found the first flower. It was a spring beauty.

"Oh, see, see," he called. "Here are a lot of them. Let's pick these."

"You pick them," said Polly. "You may have all of that kind. I am after hepaticas. I do not like spring beauties very well."

"They are pretty," said Peter. "They are pink. I like them just as well as hepaticas. Besides, maybe you will not find any of those."

"Yes, I shall," said Polly. "If the spring beauties are out, so are the hepaticas. Only they grow in the woods. I am going to see. You stay here and pick."

In the woods the ground was covered with brown leaves. A few green things were pushing up through the leaves. Everywhere there were signs of spring.

"Let us go over by the ledge, Story

Lady," said Polly. "That is my place to find them."

The ledge was steep, but Polly could climb it. Halfway up she gave a cry.

"Oh, come here, come here," she said.

"What is it, Polly? Can't you go any farther?" asked the Story Lady.

But Polly only called, "Come quickly, come quickly," and sat down on the ground.

The Story Lady climbed up as fast as she could. She looked where Polly pointed. She saw many clumps of hepaticas.

"See, see," cried Polly. "My very first ones. Aren't they pretty? This clump is blue. This clump is pink. And see all the white ones."

"Yes, they are pretty," said the Story Lady. "I am glad that I came with you. What funny furry stems they have.

"Dig away the dry stuff from around the blue clump. See if you can find this year's leaves. They are not very large yet."

"I have found them, Story Lady. Oh, there is Peter. Come up here, Peter. We have found the hepaticas. Come up and pick."

Peter started to climb up. One of his hands was full of spring beauties. He could not help himself with it.

All at once he cried, "I'm slipping! I'm slipping!" And down he slid to the bottom.

"Are you hurt?" called the Story Lady.

"No," said Peter. "And I have them."

"Have what?" asked the Story Lady.

"My spring beauties," said Peter. "They made me fall. But I would not let go of them. I shall take them home."

"They will not be so pretty as my hepaticas," said Polly. "See my bunch. See the blue ones. Come on up and pick some."

"No," said Peter. "I shall not pick hepaticas. I like these better. I shall play down here until we go home."

WILLOW WHISTLES

"Father," Polly said, "there is something I wish I had."

"What is it, Polly? Perhaps you may have it."

"I can have it, if you will make it, father. It isn't very hard, if you are a boy."

"I was a boy once, Polly. So what is it?"

"It is a willow whistle. No, it is three willow whistles — a big one, a middle-sized one, and a tiny little one. Will you make them, father?"

"Of course I will, Polly. Do you know where there are any young willow trees?"

"Oh, yes. There are some in front of the schoolhouse. And there are some on the bank of the river."

"Right you are, Polly. Let us go down to our skating place. We will get some willow branches."

"We can get pussy willows, too," said Peter.

"It is too late for them, Peter. Come along and see what has happened to your pussies. You will not know them."

Peter ran to the place where he had picked pussy willows.

"Why, look!" he said. "They have gone. But there is something hanging from the branches. They are long yellow things."

"And on this tree there are long green things," said father. "Your pussies have grown up, Peter. They have changed to yellow and green catkins."

"They were catkins all the time," said Peter. "Polly told me that when we made the cats sit on the fence. But I like them furry better than like this."

"Well, I do not," said Polly. "Fur makes me think of winter. See the little green leaves just coming out.

"And how good the catkins smell, don't they, father? I can smell the willow trees when I am in school."

"They do smell good," said father. "Now we will go home. Here is a willow

whip for you, Polly. And here is one for you, Peter. I will take this long one."

"Yours is as long as my fish pole," said Peter. "See it bend. I shall peel my whip. Shall you, father?"

"I shall take the bark off parts of it. But I must do it carefully. You see, Polly has ordered three willow whistles. I must make them.

"The big one will be cut from this big

end. The middle-sized one will be cut from the middle. The tiny little one will be cut from the tiny little end.

"Now watch me. I shall make each whistle just six inches long. What part of a foot is six inches, Polly?"

"Just half a foot, father. Put the three pieces together. I shall have a foot and a half of whistles."

"So you will, Polly. See, I make a cut in the bark around this big piece. Now I cut the place for your lips.

"Next I must get the bark off the wood. I must not break it. Can I do it?"

"No," said Peter. "Bark is like skin. It will stick unless you peel it off."

"Yes," said Polly. "You can. Tap it with your knife handle. That will make it loose. I saw the boys do it."

"Yes," said father. "That is the very way. We will tap gently, but many times. We must not break the bark. Now it is coming. See, I can pull it off."

"Wet it," said Polly. "That is what they do next."

"So it is," said father. "And now on it goes again. This is a very big whistle,

Polly. Are you sure that your mouth is big enough for it?"

"Oh, yes, I am, father. Please cut the hole where the whistle comes out. Is it done now? Will it whistle?"

"Not yet. I must take off the bark once more. Now I cut away a piece of the wood. Fit on the bark, Polly. Your big whistle is done."

"Blow it! Blow it!" cried Peter.

And Polly blew. It made a very loud noise. She blew and blew. She played that she could make a tune on it.

At last mother came out of the house.

"What a loud whistle," she said.

"I am going to have two more, mother. Father is making them."

"I think I am glad that you cannot use all three at once," said mother. "I think I am glad that your mouth is not large enough for that.

"When you are through playing with your whistles, put them into water. That will keep them soft. If they dry up, they will not last so long."

TIM'S JELLY ROAD

"Peter! Peter! Peter!" some one shouted.

Peter was in his yard. He was playing all alone. He heard the call.

He said to himself, "Some one is talking to me. It is not mother. It does not sound like her. It is not Polly. She is in school. Who is it?"

"Peter! Peter! Peter!" came the call again.

Peter ran out into the road. He looked up the hill. There was Tim in front of his house.

He was standing in the middle of the road. His head was thrown back. His mouth was wide open. He was shouting with all his might, "Peter! Peter! Peter!"

When he saw Peter, he waved his arms.

"What is it?" called Peter.

"Come up here! Come up here!" shouted Tim.

"What for?" asked Peter.

"I have something to show you," shouted Tim.

"Some snow?" shouted Peter. "What do you mean? The snow has gone."

"No," called Tim. "Not some snow. Something to show."

"All right," said Peter. "In a minute."

He ran into the house to tell mother. Then he ran up the road.

"Hello, Peter," said Tim. "Are you deaf? I thought that you would never hear me."

"Why didn't you come down then?" asked Peter. "If I had been in the house, I never should have heard. You would have called all day for nothing."

"Well, I didn't, did I?" said Tim. "So my way is easier than your way."

"What have you to show me, Tim?"

"Come on up the hill, Peter. It is there."

The road up the hill goes past Peter's and Tim's. The hill is a mile long. From the top one can see far away.

One can see many lovely hills and mountains. One can see valleys, and rivers running through them.

Peter and Polly sometimes go to the top of this road. Then they play that they can see all over the world.

But to-day Tim did not walk so far.

He said, "We have to go about half-way up. Aren't you glad that the roads are dry? I am. I got into the mud every day.

"But I never got stuck. My father told me about your getting stuck. Ho, ho! Stick-in-the-mud! Stick-in-the-mud!"

"Well, what if I did get stuck?" said Peter. "You cannot call me by that name. No one but the creamery man can."

"All right, Peter. I will not to-day. I wish you to play with me. Some other time I will call you that."

"Some other time you will not, Tim. If you do, you will be sorry. Are we nearly there?"

"Yes, we are right there. Walk along just a little. Now don't you see anything queer?"

"I should say so," Peter said. "The ground is cracked. It wiggles when I step on it. It shakes like jelly. What makes it?"

"That is just what I named it," cried Tim. "It is a jelly road. Jump up and down on it. See me!"

Tim jumped and jumped. Every time he struck the ground it shook.

There was another shaky place in the road just above. Peter found it. He jumped and jumped on that.

"This is the queerest thing that I ever saw," he called to Tim. "How did you find it?"

"I drove up here with my father yesterday. It wiggled when the horse stepped on it."

"I should think that a horse would go down in," said Peter.

"So should I. But ours did not. My father says that the frost makes it so. But he did not tell me how. If it is the frost, why isn't all the ground wiggly, then?"

"I don't know," said Peter. "I shall ask my father. He will tell me everything about it. I hope that it will stay wiggly all summer, don't you?"

"Yes, I do. Then we can show all the girls and the boys. We will show them one at a time. We will bring Polly first.

"You know the walk in front of the schoolhouse? There is a big hump in it. It is a hard hump. My father said the frost made that, too.

"But one of our hired men says that an Indian is buried there. What do you think?"

"Which man told you?" asked Peter.

"It was the one who has the crow."

"Then I do not think that it is so, Tim. He told me that he could make his crow talk, and he never has."

"Oh, dear," said Tim. "I did hope that an Indian was buried there. Let's go down and look at it, anyway."

"All right, Tim. And we will find Polly's teacher, Miss Barnes. She will tell us the truth about it."

"Well," said Tim, "if she tells us that the frost did it, I shall be sorry. I should rather have an Indian buried there."

THE ROBINS' NEST

One day mother said, "I found something this morning."

"What was it?" asked Polly.

"I think that I shall let you hunt for it, Polly. Then, if you cannot find it, I will show you."

"When may I hunt, mother? May I begin now?"

"Yes, now is a good time. Come into the back kitchen."

"Is it something that you have made, mother?"

"No, but it is being made. It is almost done."

"Is it a cobweb? I do like to see a spider spin a web."

"It is not a cobweb. I hope that there are no cobwebs in this kitchen. What you are hunting for is not in this room."

"Then why did we come?" asked Polly. "Let us go where it is."

"No," said mother. "We must not do that. If you look carefully, you can see it from here."

"Then I think I must look out of the window. Is that right, mother? I cannot see much except our little fir trees. They are so near the window."

"You are getting warm now," said mother. "Look again."

"Is it far or near, mother?"

"Very near," said mother.

"Then I will look at our little fir trees again. But I see nothing that is being made."

Just then into the fir tree flew a bird.

"Oh, there is Mrs. Robin," said Polly. "She has something in her bill. It is grass, I think. Is she making a nest? Is that it, mother?"

"That is it," said mother. "Can you see the nest?"

"Yes, yes," cried Polly. "Why, it looks all done."

"It is nearly done," said mother. "Watch the robin. Tell me what she is doing."

"She has hopped to the nest," said Polly. "She is putting the grass in it."

"That is for the lining," said mother. "I wish we had found the nest sooner. Then we could have seen her bring pieces of mud. What is she doing now?"

"She is tucking the grass down with her bill. She is working very hard. Now she is getting into the nest. She is turning around and around. She is shaking all over. Why is she doing that, mother?"

"I think that she is making the inside of the nest smooth and round," said mother.

"Now she has gone," Polly cried. "Where is the other robin? Why doesn't he help?"

"Perhaps he did at first," said mother. "But now he sits and sings. The mother robin will finish the nest herself.

"You may watch her whenever you like. If you stand just here, the birds will not see you. But you must not frighten them."

"How long will it take Mrs. Robin to build her house?" asked Polly.

"It will take about two days in all, Polly. We couldn't build our houses so quickly as that, could we?"

The next morning Polly went to look at the nest. The mother robin was sitting in it.

That afternoon she looked again. The mother robin was gone. But what do you think was in the nest? A beautiful blue egg!

The next day there was another. And the next another.

Polly was very happy. She said to mother, "I never saw anything so pretty as those blue eggs. I wish that the nest would be piled full. Will there be more?"

"Perhaps not," said mother. "We must wait and see."

But the next morning when Polly looked she could not see. The mother robin was sitting on the nest.

In the afternoon the bird was still there.

"Oh, dear," said Polly. "Why won't she get off? How many do you think she has laid now?"

"One more," said mother. "I saw it a little while ago. I think that now she is going to stay on her four eggs.

"She is going to keep them warm. By and by little robins will hatch from them."

"How long do you think it will take, mother?"

"I am not quite sure. We must watch and find out. It takes hens' eggs about three weeks."

"Will my poor robin sit there all that time?" asked Polly. "She will get tired of sitting still. I do."

"I think that she can leave the nest once in a while," said mother. "She will go to find food.

"But she must not let her eggs get cold. If she does, they will not hatch."

"Then I hope that she will be careful," said Polly. "Why doesn't the father robin bring her food?"

"Perhaps he will. But I think that he is too busy singing. Go out of doors and hear him."

Polly went. Yes, there was the father robin. He was in an elm tree near by. He seemed to be watching his mate on the nest.

"Are you singing to your mate?" asked Polly. "I wish I knew. I like to hear you sing, 'Cheer up, cheerily.'"

Perhaps robin was singing to his mate.

Perhaps his song meant this:

"How well it is built, our fine, new, round nest.

What beautiful eggs! What beautiful eggs!

They all soon will hatch, I'm sure that they will.

And then we shall have our dear children four.

Oh, happy am I. Cheer up, cheerily."

Polly listened to his song.

Then she said, "Robin, you cheered me up when you first came. Now you are cheering up your mate.

"I think that your song is beautiful. And I am as happy as you."

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE ROBINS' NEST

The next day Polly saw the four eggs herself. The mother bird had gone for food. In a few minutes she was back.

"O robin," said Polly. "Don't you stay away too long. Don't you let your eggs get cold. I wish that I could feed you. But I should frighten you."

On the third day she said, "Is it time now for the eggs to hatch?"

"Not yet," said mother. "We must wait much longer."

So Polly counted the days. When ten had gone, she said, "I am afraid that the robin has let her eggs get cold. I am afraid that they will not hatch."

"Do not be afraid," said mother. "Wait."

In three more days something happened. Three little birds hatched. Polly did not see them when it happened.

That afternoon she went to look at the nest. The mother robin was not there. The blue eggs were not there. But, at the bottom of the nest, something moved a little.

Polly ran to find her mother. "Mother," she called. "Come here, please. Come and see the robins' nest."

When Polly got back to the window, she saw the mother robin. She was standing on the edge of the nest. In her bill was part of a worm.

And what were those queer things in the nest? There were three sticking straight up.

Could they be heads on slender necks? Yes, they must be, for every one had a great, wide-open mouth. The mouths were yellow outside and orange inside.

Just as mother came into the kitchen the robin bent down. She tucked the worm into one wide-open mouth.

Then she watched her children for a few minutes. She cleaned the nest. And away she flew.

"Are those really little robins?" asked Polly. "What homely things. Where are their feathers? Where are their wings?"

"Their feathers will grow, by and by," said mother. "Here comes the father bird. He has a worm, too. Watch the little ones."

They felt him light near the nest. At once they lifted up their slender necks. They opened their great mouths.

"Why, there are only three," said Polly. "There were four eggs."

"One did not hatch," said mother. "Perhaps three will be enough to feed and to keep clean.

"A little robin eats more food every day than it weighs. What if you and Peter did that? I could do nothing but cook and feed you."

"How that father and mother robin will have to work now," said Polly. "I am glad to see lazy old father robin helping."

"I think he helped before by singing, Polly. Besides he was guarding the nest. He would not let other birds come near it."

"Here is mother robin with more food,"

said Polly. "See those queer mouths. Does she know which to feed? Why, she has taken the worm away from that one. She has given it to another. How mean!"

"She did it because the first one was not ready for it. He did not swallow it. That is the way she knows which to feed," said mother.

"She is getting into the nest now," said Polly. "Is she going to sit again?"

"I think that she is going to keep the little birds warm. They are very young and they have no feathers, you see."

"That is so," said Polly. "I did not think of that. Does she cover them up when it rains, too?"

"Oh, yes," said mother. "We call it 'brooding' them.

"When it is cold, she will brood them to keep them warm. When it is warm, she will brood them to keep the hot sun from them. When it is wet, she will brood them to keep them dry."

"And then she feeds them all the rest of the time," said Polly. "Oh, yes, and she cleans the nest, too.

"She is a good mother, isn't she? I shall watch her all summer."

"You cannot," said mother. "These little birds will not live in the nest all summer.

"In about twelve days they will fly away. You cannot grow up so soon as that, can you?"

"No," said Polly. "I cannot grow up in twelve years. I hope that I shall see them fly away. I shall watch for that."

THE EMPTY NEST

"Father," said Polly, "have you seen our apple trees?"

"Of course I have seen them, Polly. Didn't we burn the worms' nests on them last month?"

"Yes," said Polly. "But I mean to-day, or yesterday."

"No," said father. "What is it? More worms? How can that be?"

"There are no worms, father. I think that you burned them all. There is something pretty on them now. Mother and I know."

"Come out and show me," said father. "I must know everything that mother and you know."

So father and Polly went to the apple trees. There were not more than two dozen. But they were well cared for.

They gave Mr. Howe all the apples that he needed. And there were always some left over to sell.

"Now do you see, father?" asked Polly. "Oh, do you see?"

"I see and I smell, Polly. You mean the apple blossoms. They are beginning to come out. Aren't they beautiful? Let us look at the different trees."

"Yes," said Polly. "Then we can tell whether we shall have many apples."

"These will be the best cooking apples," said father. "Here are many buds.

"These will be the eating apples. Some ripen early. Some ripen late. Here is a tree which bears sweet apples."

"Yes," said Polly. "And here are the crab trees. Crabs are good for jelly."

"They are loaded with blossoms," said father. "If we have no frosts, we shall have more crabs than we need."

"That is what mother told me, too, father. So I am going to ask for something. Will you give me all the blossoms on this crab tree?"

"Why, yes, I think so," said father.

"Oh, goody, goody!" cried Polly. "I

never before had all I wanted. Please pick me that big branch. I shall take it into the house.

"I shall put it into water. It will open more, then. How sweet the room will smell!"

"Yes, it will," said father. "And how sweet all these trees will smell in a few days. They will be covered with lovely pink and white blossoms.

"Can't you shut your eyes and pretend that you see them now? I can. But I must not stop to play with you any longer. I must go to the store. Good-by."

"Please come and see the little robins first. They are twelve days old to-day.

"They have been looking over the side of the nest for two days now. Maybe they are getting ready to fly."

"Very well," said father. "We will go to the tree."

"I always watch from inside the kitchen window," said Polly. "I think it will be fun to go to the tree."

"Perhaps you cannot see so well," said father. "But I will lift you up. Here we are. Up you go. Now what do you see?"

"Why," said Polly. "The nest is empty! The robins are not here! I am so sorry. I wanted to see them go."

"I can hear the old birds calling," said father. "They are out by the fence. So some of the little ones have flown over there."

Just then Polly said, "O father! I think that I see one. Lift me up again, please. Yes, there he is on the branch near the nest.

"He sits so still that I did not see him at first. What a funny little tail he has, hasn't he? Do you think that he can fly?"

"Oh, yes," said father. "The others did. He will by and by. Is he just like the big robins?"

"No," said Polly. "His breast does not look like theirs. And it is all speckled. Oh! Oh! He is hopping away. He is going to fly. There he goes."

And the little robin really flew. Out of the fir tree, down, down, and over by the fence he went.

One of the old birds saw him. She began to call to him.

"I think that we can leave him," said father. "The old birds know just what to do. If we stay, we shall only frighten them.

"You see that the cats are shut up. I will go to the store. Your robin family has grown up."

THE APPLE-BLOSSOM SNOWSTORM

"Children, children, what are you doing?" called mother.

"We are playing 'Do as I do.' Just watch us for a minute, mother," said Polly.

"Oh, I see now," said mother. "When I was little, we called it 'Follow your leader.' Are you the leader, Polly?"

"Yes. And I have made Peter and Tim do all sorts of things. See them now."

Polly sat down on the grass. Peter and Tim sat down, too. She jumped up and ran a little way. Peter and Tim did that.

Then she lay down and rolled over and over. Peter did as Polly did.

But Tim said, "That makes me dizzy. I shall not do it."

"Then you cannot be leader ever," said Peter. "Do it just a little." And so Tim rolled over and over.

Next, Polly walked backward to the fence. Then she climbed to the top. She walked along the top.

All at once she threw up her arms and screamed. She pretended to fall off. But she really jumped.

Peter and Tim did all these things. Only they screamed louder than Polly.

When they had jumped down, Polly began to hop on one foot. And after her hopped Peter and Tim.

Once she looked around at them. They looked so funny that she laughed.

The boys heard her. They thought that was a part of the game, too. So they began to laugh louder than Polly did.

This was so funny that she laughed harder. She could not stop. She laughed so hard that she fell down in a heap.

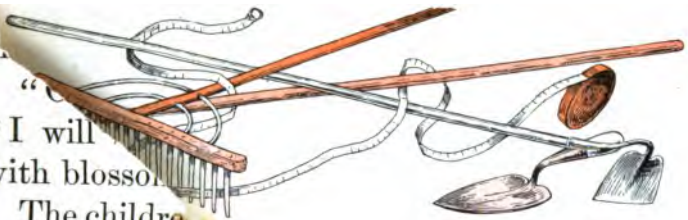
Peter and Tim fell down in a heap, too. But they fell on top of Polly.

"I know something," said Polly.

"What?" asked Peter and Tim.

"Let me up and I will tell you. It is something to do."

"We will not play this game any more," said Peter.



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"How silly, Peter," said Polly.

is not pink. Besides, it does not smell.

These blossoms are much prettier than

snow. And they smell very sweet, too."

Just then there came a puff of wind.

The petals of the blossoms began to fall.

Down they came, many at a time.

"Oh, how pretty," said Peter. "They *are* just like snow. This is like a snowstorm. I like to see them coming down."

"Catch some of them," said Polly. "See if they are the same shape as the snowflakes. But it does look like a snowstorm, doesn't it? It is a snowstorm of apple blossoms."

"Let's shake your tree, Polly. We do that to the fir trees when it has snowed."

ETER'S GARDEN

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robins' nest. He had

As soon as

eeds.

Next, Polly walked backward to the fence. Then she climbed to the top. She walked along the top.

All at once she threw up her arms and screamed. She pretended to fall. But she really jumped.

Peter and Tim did all these things. They screamed louder than Polly.

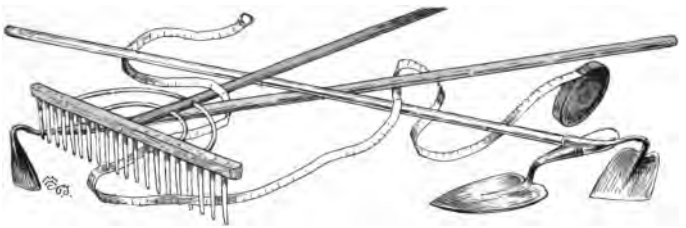
When they had jumped down, Polly began to hop on one foot. Then Tim hopped. Then Peter and Polly.

One day the children looked at the tree. It was very big. It had many leaves.

So the children tried. But the tree was too big to shake.

"We must wait for another breeze to shake it for us," said Polly. "Come on, now. I've thought of something else that we can do.

"We will go to our gardens. We will see what has come up since yesterday."



PETER'S GARDEN

Mr. Howe had plowed his garden before mother found the robins' nest. He had decided just what to plant. As soon as the ground was warm he put in some seeds.

Peter watched his father. He thought that he should like a garden, too. His father showed him a small corner.

He said, "You may have this piece of ground, if you will do something for me."

"Oh, yes, I will do it," said Peter. "What is it?"

"You must measure your ground," said father. "You must tell me how far it is from the fence to this stick.

"And you must tell me how far it is from this stick to the other fence. Can you?"

Peter said, "I can measure it with your long measure. But I cannot do it alone."

"Mother will read the measure for you. Then you can tell me about it," said father.

That night Peter said to Polly, "You watch those robins all the time. I shall have something to watch, too."

"What are you going to watch, Peter?"

"A garden," said Peter. "I am going to have one. Father said so. I am going to plant lots of things."

"What?" asked Polly.

"Carrots," said Peter. "They are for you. They are just the color of your hair."

"I do not care," said Polly. "I shall feed them to Brownie. Horses like carrots. So do I. I like my hair, too. What else?"

"Lettuce and radishes," said Peter. "And perhaps corn and some bean poles."

"Bean poles!" cried Polly. "How can you be so silly, Peter? You cannot grow bean poles."

"Why can't I?" asked Peter. "Father did last year. They had white blossoms. They grew way up above our heads."

"You silly thing," cried Polly. "I think that you mean pole beans, not bean poles."

"Maybe I do," said Peter. "They are just the same words turned around."

The next day Peter and mother went to the garden. Peter fastened one end of the measure to the fence. Then he unrolled it. He measured to the stick.

Mother said, "That is six feet. Now measure from the stick to the other fence."

"Why, it is just the same," said Peter. "I kept my finger on the place on the measure. So I know."

At noon Peter said, "Father, I have measured. It is six feet on those two sides."

"Then it is six feet on all four sides," said father. "Because the sides are all alike. It is a square garden.

"Here are some lettuce seeds for you. Here are some radish seeds, too. Come and plant your garden."

Peter planted his seeds. Then he ran into the house. He took something out of a box. He held it very carefully.

Polly saw him. "What have you there?" she called.

"Something," said Peter.

"Is it to plant?" asked Polly.

"Yes," said Peter.

"Where did you get it? Is it a different kind of seed, Peter? Let me see it."

"No," said Peter. "You cannot see it."

He dug a little hole. He dropped in his seed very carefully. But, before he could cover it up, Polly had seen.

How she did laugh!

"O Peter!" sh cried. "It is a tooth! It is the one that you pulled out last winter! Do you thi k that it will grow?"

"Yes, I do," said Peter. "It will grow more teeth. You will not laugh so much when it does. Don't you touch it."

And he covered the tooth carefully.

DANDELION CURLS

The dandelions had been out for many days. The grass in front of Polly's house was yellow with them.

Every morning father said, "Please pick the dandelions near the house. I do not wish them to go to seed. They are weeds, you know."

Mother said, "You were glad that there were some of those weeds a little while ago."

"What do you mean?" asked father.

"I mean that you liked the dandelion greens I cooked for you."

"Yes, I did," said father. "I should like more, too. But I know that they are not so good after the flowers open."

"Peter and I helped to dig those greens," said Polly. "It was fun. Our hands were all stained. They are stained now, too, every morning.

"Some of the big boys dug bushels of greens. They took them to Large Village. They sold them there. One boy made five dollars. I heard him tell my teacher."

"I shall dig more greens next year," said Peter. "I shall sell them. Will you buy of me, mother?"

"Yes, Peter, all that you will dig. What shall you do with your money?"

"Put it in the big bank, mother. I shall put all my money there. Then, when I grow up, I shall be rich."

"If you will save your money, I will pay you for picking the dandelions every morning," said father. "I will give you each two cents a day for doing it."

"All right," said Peter. "Come on, Polly. Let's get them picked now."

That morning there were more flowers than ever. The lawn was yellow with them. So were the sides of the road.

"It is too bad to pick them all," said Polly. "They are so pretty. I wish that they were good to put into water. But they are not."

"No," said Peter. "They melt so quickly."

"Wilt so quickly, you mean, Peter."

"Maybe I do," said Peter. "I know something. Let's hunt for dandelions with long stems. We can make horns of them."

Polly said, "I will, just as soon as these are all picked."

"I am going now," said Peter. "My half is done."

Peter ran up the road. He went into the field near the little brook. You can find it on the map in the front of this book.

Soon Polly came. Peter had found a stem about a foot long. He picked off the flower. He put the stem into his mouth.

The juice in it was white. It was bitter. But Peter did not care.

The stem was hollow. Peter could blow through it. He blew so hard that his face got very red. But he could not make any noise.

"Throw it away and try another," said Polly. "You know you cannot make a horn of every one."

Peter picked another. He blew on it. It made a loud noise. It was a good horn. Soon Polly found a horn, too. They both blew and blew.

"I think that they sound like frogs," said Polly. "I am tired of blowing mine. See, here is a dandelion gone to seed.

"Let's blow the seeds off. Then we shall know if mother wants us."

Polly blew three times. There were no seeds left.

"She does not want us," said Peter. "I knew that she did not. It is Saturday. We can play all the morning."

"No, she does not want us," said Polly. "See those seeds fly away. Maybe some will fly over to our house. They will make more plants on our lawn.

"So what is the use of our picking the flowers every day?"

"To get money," said Peter. "And anyway father told us to do it. I am going to make curls now."

He picked a long dandelion stem. He put the large end into his mouth. He split the stem with his tongue.

The sides curled down. He kept splitting it more and more. Each side made a small round roll.

At last he had split the stem to the flower. Then he shook out the two round rolls. Each roll became a curl.

He did this with another long stem. Then he put the curls over his ears. He had two curls on each side of his face.

"Polly, Polly," he said, "now I have curls like yours. Only mine are green and yours are red."

Polly laughed. "How funny you look," she said. "I'd rather have red hair than green hair. But, if you like green hair, let's make you lots of curls.

"We will stick them up under your cap. We can make them stay."

"All right," said Peter. "Then let's show them to Tim. We will tell him that we have green wigs to sell."

DECORATION DAY

"You know that I must start for school early this morning, mother," said Polly. "I have to stop at grandmother's. She is going to pick her lilacs for me."

"Then you must go now," said mother.

"Father said that I might take Brownie and the cart. I am going to carry the lilacs to the cemetery. May Peter go with me, to hold Brownie?"

"Yes," said mother. "Peter may go. Run and harness Brownie. I will get Peter ready."

Polly could harness Brownie very well. She had done it many times. Soon she drove to the side door.

"Good-by, mother," she called.

"Good-by, Polly," said mother. "I am glad that it is such a lovely day."

"Jump in, Peter," said Polly. "You

may hold this flag. See the little flags that father put on Brownie's harness."

"Where are we going?" asked Peter.

"We are going to school, first. I told you yesterday what day it is."

"Well," said Peter, "You never before went to school in the cart. Why are you driving to school?"

"Wait and see," said Polly. "I told you all about it once, and you cannot remember. I shall not tell you again.

"There is grandmother. Please hold Brownie."

Polly jumped out. She ran to the door. On the steps was a pile of lilac blossoms.

Grandmother said, "I will help you put them into the cart, Polly. See! This is the way we will lay them in."

"How sweet they smell, grandmother. They are lovely, aren't they?"

"Yes, they are, Polly. And your cart is half full. I have plenty left, too. Where are you going next?"

"To the Story Lady's house. She will give us her white lilacs. She said so. Good-by, grandmother. Thank you."

"Good-by," said grandmother. "I am glad it is such a lovely day."

It was a beautiful day. The sky was blue. The bobolinks were flying up from the fields and singing. The air was sweet with the spring smells.

Peter and Polly drove slowly down the hill. They went through the bridge.

The Story Lady was waiting for them. A pile of lilacs lay on her steps, too. These blossoms were all white. Polly and the Story Lady filled the cart with them.

"Thank you, Story Lady," said Polly. "Good-by."

"You are welcome, Polly. I am glad to have my white lilacs go to the cemetery. I am glad that it is such a lovely day, too."

"That is what every one has said to me," said Polly. "And I know all the girls and the boys are glad."

Then Peter and Polly drove to the schoolhouse. Most of the other children were there. Each had a bunch of lilacs. Each carried a new flag.

Peter said, "Why, there is Tim. He does not go to school. He has a bunch of flowers and a flag. I shall go with him.

"I remember about it now. We are going up to the cemetery with the flowers. We shall put them on the soldiers' graves."

"Yes," said Polly. "That is it. And you go along with Tim. Take some of our lilacs. You must carry a bunch. My teacher is going to ride with me."

Just then Miss Barnes, Polly's teacher, said, "Now we are all ready, children. You may walk along. The big boys first, you know. Polly and I will keep up with you.

"How lovely your lilacs are, Polly. You have the only white ones. Is there room for this bundle of flags?"

"We can put them under the seat," said Polly. "Now shall I start?"

It was a long walk to the cemetery. The road was dusty. The sun was quite hot. But the children did not care.

They liked to go, once a year, to decorate the soldiers' graves.

At last they were there. Polly fastened Brownie to the fence. The big boys took out her lilacs. The biggest boy of all took out the flags.

The children followed him. He went to a grave where there was a torn, faded flag. In place of that he put a new one.

Then some child put a bunch of lilacs there, too. They were very quiet as they moved about the cemetery.

At last all the flags were used. All the lilacs were used, too. And all the soldiers' graves were decorated.

Then Miss Barnes said, "Let us sit down a minute. We will talk about to-day. Do you like to come here, children? If you do, tell me about it."

The biggest boy said, "These soldiers were brave men. They went to war. That is why we bring flags to them."

"We bring them flowers because we do not forget what they did for their country," said a big girl.

"Yes," said Miss Barnes. "Let us never forget that they tried to do their duty.

Let us be like them. Let us try to do ours, too. While you are little, you will have little duties to do."

"Like bringing wood," said one boy.

"Or washing the dishes," said a girl.

"Or going for the cows." "Or feeding the hens." "Or working in the garden." "Or making the beds." "Or doing errands," said others.

"Yes, all of those things," said Miss Barnes. "And when you are bigger, you will have bigger duties.

"You cannot do them so well if you do not first try to do the little ones well. Please think of this for a whole year.

"Now let us go home. And a year from to-day we will come again. We will bring more flags and more flowers.

"And then you may tell me whether you have done your duty as these men did theirs."

So the children went down the road to the village. And the cemetery was quiet as before.

Only now there were fresh flowers on the soldiers' graves. And new flags fluttered in the wind. They were for remembrance.

WHAT PETER'S FISHHOOK CAUGHT

"What is your fish pole doing out here, Peter? Have you been fishing?"

"Yes," said Peter. "I went down on the rocks by our skating place. Mother let me. You were at school then."

"Who dug your worms?"

"I did. I dug two for Tim and two for me."

"Did you have any bites?"

"No. But Tim did. He almost caught a fish. But it got away."

"Well, you'd better take the worm off your fishhook. If it dries on, it will be hard to get off. Father told you to remember to do it."

"Yes, I will," said Peter. "But come and feed my hen first."

Peter's hen was old Speckle. She had twelve downy little chickens. It was the

first day that Speckle had taken them for a walk.

Before this she had been shut up in a coup. Her little chickens could run in and out. But she could not.

Peter scattered some corn in front of her. She picked it up quickly.

"Hear her talk to her children," said Polly. "See them run to her. I wish I could know what she is saying."

"Look!" said Peter. "All the other hens have heard her cluck. They are coming, too. But she has eaten the corn we scattered. They will not get any."

All at once every hen stopped scratching. Then all the hens except Speckle ran toward the henhouse.

Speckle clucked as fast as she could. Her children ran to her. She covered them with her wings. Then she stood quite still.

"Well, what is the matter with the hens?" said Peter. "Why are they acting like that?"

"Oh, I see, I see, Peter," cried Polly. "Look at that big bird up in the air. I am sure it is a hawk. It eats hens and chickens. They are all afraid of it."

"Let's get mother," said Peter. "She will drive it away."

But the hawk flew away itself. It flew higher and higher in the air. At last it looked like a little speck.

As soon as it was out of sight the hens ran out and began scratching again.

"I guess it thought that we could take care of the hens," said Peter.

"Perhaps it did," said Polly. "But the hens did not think so, did they? What a noise they are making now. What do you suppose is the trouble? Come on and see."

There was a great squawking around the corner of the barn. So around the corner the children ran. What do you think they saw?

On the ground they saw Peter's fish pole. And on the end of the line they saw a big, fat hen.

She was hopping up and down. She was squawking. She was trying her best to get away. But she could not. The fish-hook held her fast.

"O Peter! Peter! You have caught a hen! You have caught a hen! It was your fish worm. She tried to eat it. You ought to have taken it off. Run and get mother."

Mother caught the poor hen. She took the hook from the hen's bill. It had not hurt her much. But it had frightened her. And she had frightened the other hens. They squawked and squawked for some time.

Peter said, "I am sorry, mother. I did not mean to hurt the hen. I will remember to take my worm off, next time. And I will put my pole away, too."

"That is right," said mother. "Please do remember. Fishhooks are not made for catching hens."

MUD PIES AND MARBLES

One day Polly said, "Peter, I am going to cook to-day. You may, too, if you wish."

"Cook what?" asked Peter.

"I am going to make pies, mud pies," said Polly.

"All right," said Peter. "I will get a pail of water. We will make them out in the barn."

Peter got the water. Polly got the dirt. Then the fun began.

Polly made apple pies, first. Then she made mince pies and pumpkin pies. Peter made lemon pies and raisin pies.

"I can think of lots more kinds," said Polly. "Perhaps I shall make more by and by. But first I shall bake these."

"Where is the oven?"

"Over on the fence. The sun is very hot. They will soon bake there. Help me carry mine over."

"I shall bake mine, too. I will carry my lemon and raisin pies to the oven now. Then I will help you."

Peter took a shingle. He played it was a tray. He put his pies on it. He started out of the barn.

But he ran into Polly. This made him spill his pies on the barn floor.

He put down his tray and picked them up.

"O Polly!" he said. "See my mud pies. I dropped them. They are all dirty. There is hay on them."

Polly thought that very funny. She laughed hard. Do you know why?

"How can you get mud pies dirty?" she asked. "They are made of dirt to begin with. Pull off the hay. They will be as good as ever."

"Maybe they are made of dirt," said Peter. "But they were clean on the outside. How long will it take to bake them?"

"All the afternoon, I think. I am not going to make any more pies. I am going to make marbles."

"How do you do that? I have some marbles in the house. Can we make more like those? I should like to."

"We cannot color them," said Polly. "Perhaps we can after they are baked. But we cannot now.

"Let us go up the hill to the clay bank. We need clay for our marbles."

Peter took a small box. Polly took a trowel. The children filled the box with clay. Then they went back to the barn.

"Now show me how to do it," said Peter.

"Take a little piece of clay like this," said Polly. "Roll it around and around in your hands like this.

"That is to make it round, you see. When it is quite round, it is ready to bake."

"I can do it," said Peter. "See this one."

"That is not quite round. It would not roll very well. See mine."

Soon Peter could make marbles like Polly's. He made a dozen.

Then he said, "I do not wish to bake them in the sun. That takes too long. I wish to bake them in the real oven. I am going to ask mother if I may."

Mother said, "Yes." So Peter and Polly put their little balls of clay into the oven.

Then they waited for them to grow hard. They opened the oven door every few minutes, to look at the marbles.

"I am sure that they are dry now," said Peter. "I am going to take mine out."

He picked up a marble. He forgot how hot it would be. It burned his fingers.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" he cried. And he dropped the clay on the floor.

"Hold the shovel for me," said Polly. "I will roll them on it with this fork. Then we will let them cool on the piazza."

At last the marbles were out of the oven. Some had cracked. Some were not round where they had touched the stove. But some were quite round. There were about three dozen good ones in all.

Peter and Polly were very much pleased. They ran to show mother.

Then they played with their marbles on the piazza. Some of them broke. But the children did not care. They knew how to make more.

"To-morrow," said Polly, "we will paint what are left. Then we will take them over to father's store to sell."

"Perhaps he will not let us," said Peter.

Polly said, "Well, if he does not, then we can keep them ourselves and play with them."

THE BROOK IN THE WOODS

"Mother," said Polly, "I wish to play up in the woods to-day. May I?"

"I think so, if you will take Wag-wag. Is Peter going?"

"Yes, mother. And Tim, too. Do you remember what the Story Lady told us last winter? It was about trees.

"We are going to hunt for dryads. Perhaps there are some now. Perhaps one lives in my big, hollow tree. You know where that is. What do you think, mother?"

"I think that it is a lovely day, Polly. I think that you must take your luncheon. And I think that, if there are dryads, you will find them."

"Oh, may we take our luncheon, mother? Goody, goody! I will get Tim and Peter now."

"And I will get your luncheon ready," said mother.

RHODA CAMPBELL

The three children set off up the hill. Wag-wag and Collie ran ahead. Polly carried the luncheon.

It was a lovely day. The hills were green. The sky was blue.

"I like this better than I do when the hills are white," said Polly.

"So do I now," said Peter. "That is because we are going on a picnic."

"But don't you remember our winter picnic with father? I never had such a good picnic."

"Yes," said Peter. "I remember. He lighted a fire right in the snow. Then he cooked our dinner. I had coffee that day. I wish we could light a fire."

"Oh, look, boys. We have come to the brook. Let's wade. Shall we?"

The three took off their shoes and stockings. The water was cold. But they did not care.

They put their stockings into their shoes. They hung their shoes over their shoulders.

The brook ran down the steep hillside. There were waterfalls in it. At the bottom of some of these falls there were small pools. Here the children waded.

Polly said, "Let's play that this is a great river. Let's play that we are the very first white people to see it.

"So we must find out all about it. We must go to the place where it begins."

She climbed on and on up the brook. She really wished to find a larger pool.

At last she called to the boys, "Come up here. Come up here. I have found a bathtub. Come and see it."

"Why, so you have," said Peter. "See, Tim. The bottom of this pool is all one rock. Who made it?"

"I do not know," said Polly. "Nobody, I guess. But see how smooth it is. It is rounding in the middle, too, just like a real bathtub. And look at this."

She showed them a round stone. It was as large as her head. It fitted into a hollow at the side of the bathtub.

"I know what made that," said Tim. "The water made it. The water wore it smooth. We have a stone like it at home."

"So you have," said Polly. "Only yours is white and this is brown. Then maybe the water made the bathtub, too.

"Let's put on our shoes and stockings now. I am hungry. I shall eat my luncheon."

"Yes, let's eat it," said Peter. "Then we shall not have to carry it."

"We shall carry it inside us," said Tim.

"Well, I should rather do that," said Peter. "It is not so heavy there."

Polly laughed. She said, "It will be easier for me if you carry your own. I have had to bring it all the way so far."

She opened the basket of luncheon. How good everything looked! Mother had put in hard-boiled eggs. She had made ham sandwiches and jelly sandwiches. She had put in cookies, too.

Polly found in the basket three paper drinking cups. These the children filled from the brook.

While they ate their luncheon, Wag-wag and Collie sat near. They were waiting for a bite.

Polly said, "There are not many bites for you doggies. You may have your dinner when we get home. Can't you wait until then?"

When everything was eaten, Polly picked up the papers. She put them all into her basket. Father had taught her that she must not leave papers lying about.

If you will think hard, you will see why this is so.

Then the children were ready to start on.

HUNTING DRYADS

"Now shall we go to where the brook begins?" asked Peter.

"No," said Polly. "I am going to that hollow tree I told you about. I shall see if a dryad lives in it."

"What is a dryad?" asked Tim.

"It is a lovely maiden," said Polly. "Dryads live in trees. If you cut their trees down, you will kill the dryads."

"Is that a truly-true story, or a once-upon-a-time story, Polly?" asked Tim.

"People used to believe it long ago," said Polly. "The Story Lady told me. She said it is not a truly-true story.

"But I thought that I would look for

dryads just the same. Maybe the people who believed in them were right."

"Then we will all look," said Tim. "But I don't know what to look for."

"Look for a girl dressed in green, Tim. And we must listen, too. Perhaps we can hear one, if we cannot see one. Now you boys be as still as you can."

So Polly and Peter and Tim crept softly along. They looked carefully among the great tree trunks. They stopped often to walk around some very large tree.

"The dryads will hide from us," whispered Polly. "We must look hard."

How green the woods were! What bright spots the sun made on the trees! What a soft sound the leaves made! Were they whispering about the dryads?

All at once Peter said, "There, behind that fir tree! I saw something move!"

Polly ran to look. But it was only the leaves of a bush moving. They were a lighter green than the fir. They had looked to Peter like a green dress.

Just then all the children heard something. They stopped. The sound came again. They looked at one another.

"It is a song," whispered Polly. "Some one in front of us is singing. Oh, why did she stop?"

But, as she spoke, they heard another song. This seemed to come from behind them.

"It is the echo," said Polly. "Or else it is some one else singing."

"It was not an echo," said Peter. "It was different from the first. Echoes are the same."

"Then it was another person singing," said Polly. "There is the first one again. Hush!"

This time the second voice seemed to answer the first voice. But the children could not understand the words.

"There are two of them, whatever they are," said Polly. "And I think that they must be dryads. They are calling to each other.

"I am going to see if I can find one of them. Come on."

"I think I am afraid," said Tim. "And I think that I am going to be more afraid. Suppose it is an elephant or a tiger?"

"O Tim! Do not be so silly," cried

Polly. "Elephants and tigers cannot sing. Only girls and women sing like that.

"Are you afraid of girls and women? If you are, call the dogs."

"No, I am not, Polly. And I cannot see the dogs. So go on."

"There is your hollow tree, Polly," said Peter. "Are you going to look inside it?"

"Of course I am. Maybe I shall find something, too."

Polly found something outside. On the rocks in front of the tree there were pieces of ground pine. Ground pine was hanging from the rough bark, too.

Polly stepped inside the hollow tree. "Oh, look! Look!" she cried. "See here! See here!"

She held a wreath up in her hand. It was made of green maple leaves. They were pinned together with the stems of the leaves.

Polly put it on her head. It just fitted.

"It is to wear," she said. "A dryad must have made it. She would not have a hat. She must have made this to wear instead. I shall take it home. She can make another."

Just then the children heard the song again. It seemed nearer than before. Then came the other voice. That seemed nearer, too.

"Perhaps they are coming back home," said Polly. "Perhaps they have been walking in the woods. Let's sit down here and wait. We must be very still. Then we shall not frighten them."

Again and again the children heard the voices. But they came no nearer. They seemed to be going farther and farther away.

At last Polly said, "I know I have heard that song before. But I cannot think where."

Peter said, "I am tired of the old song.

I think they know that we are here. They will not come home. I am going to shout."

And before Polly could stop him he shouted, "Come home! Come home! We wish to see you. We cannot wait much longer. Come home!"

"O Peter!" cried Polly. "You have spoiled it. We might as well go ourselves. They will not come now, of course."

"They would not anyway," said Peter. "They know magic. They knew that we were waiting. I think that is what they were saying when they sang."

So the children went home. Out of the woods and down the hill they ran. They did not stop to wade in the brook.

When they were once started, they did not stop for anything.

On the steps of her house they saw the Story Lady. Mother was sitting there with her. They were fanning themselves. Collie and Wag-wag were lying in the shade.

Polly began to tell her story. When she spoke of the singing, she stopped. She looked at mother and then at the Story Lady.

She said, "I have just thought of something. That song sounded like one of yours, Story Lady. Have you been playing dryads this afternoon, too?

"You are hot. You must have run fast to get home first. I see now why we lost the dogs. They came home with you."

Tim said, "I was a little afraid. But I went just the same. And I am glad now that I did."

"That is right," said the Story Lady. "Always go just the same, even if you are afraid. If you do, you may find that there is nothing to frighten you."

THE SOFT GRAY PUSSY

Down at grandmother's there were two cats. They were black and white. They were almost alike.

That is why grandmother had named them, "Cat" and "Copy-cat."

She did not know where they came from. One day in the winter they had followed her home. Then they were half-grown kittens. Now they were grown-up cats.

Polly liked them very much. But not better than Blacky, her own cat.

One day grandmother called to her. "Come in, Polly," she said. "I have something to show you."

Polly went into the house and grandmother showed her a little gray kitten. It was the very prettiest kitten that Polly had ever seen.

"Oh, where did you get him, grandmother? Where did you get him?" asked Polly.

"Do you like him, Polly? I thought that you would. I do, too. I got him at Large Village. I brought him home this morning."

"Did you bring him in a box? Was he afraid?"

"He was not afraid. He does not seem to be afraid of anything. He started in a box. But he put his little pink nose through a hole in the top.

"He teased to get out. So, at last, I let him. Then he curled down beside me on the seat. He went fast asleep under the lap robe."

"Isn't he even afraid of Cat and Copy-cat? I should think that he would be. They are so big and he is so little."

"No, he is not. He is a brave little cat. Let one of them in and you shall see."

Polly opened the door. In came Copy-cat. He ran at once up to the little gray puss.

Gray Pussy had seen Copy-cat only once before. So he did not feel acquainted. He was not sure that the big cat was his friend.

But he did not run away. He stood just

where he was. He put his ears down flat on his head. He lifted his back as high as he could.

He made the fur stand out on his tail. He watched Copy-cat with his bright eyes. He did not move.

At last Copy-cat was tired of looking at Gray Pussy. He started to walk around him.

As he walked, Gray Pussy turned slowly about in the place where he was standing. He kept his head toward Copy-cat. He kept his eyes on him.

"Isn't he a brave little kitten?" asked grandmother. "He is so little. But he will not run away. He will not hide. He just keeps his face toward the enemy."

"But Copy-cat is not his enemy, is he?" asked Polly.

"Not really," said grandmother. "But little Gray Pussy does not know that yet. By and by they will play together."

"I am going to put Copy-cat out," said Polly. "Now come here to me, you pretty Gray Pussy.

"See his little pink nose, grandmother, and his long white whiskers. See the white

spot under his chin, and oh, he has four white feet."

"See how soft his fur is, Polly. And look at his tail. The fur is so long that it looks like a plume."

"I have found something else cunning, grandmother. It is those long white hairs in his ears. Oh, see him lie on his back and play with his tail."

"Take him out of doors, if you wish, Polly. But look out for dogs. He is so little that, if one comes, he will not know what to do."

"I do not believe that he will run," said Polly. "He is so brave."

"I am afraid that he will not," grandmother said. "And a dog might give him one shake and kill him. So be careful."

Gray Pussy rode out of doors in Polly's arms. He sang a little song to her, as they went.

When she put him down, he smelled around a little. Then he was ready for a game.

All at once he ran as fast as he could to a tree. His little short legs flew over the ground. His plumy tail was straight up.

Polly watched him. He climbed a few feet up the tree trunk. Then he looked around at Polly as if to say, "Why don't you run after me?"

Polly said, "Oh, you cunning little playmate. I would run after you. But I am afraid that it might frighten you."

Gray Pussy seemed to say, "Come on! Come on! I shall not be afraid." And he jumped down and ran to another tree.

After him went Polly. Gray Pussy beat her to the tree. Then he climbed just a little way up the trunk.

He looked at Polly as if to say, "Can't you climb, too?"

"No, I cannot, you funny little cat," said Polly. "But I can pat you." And she did.

Then Gray Pussy jumped down. He rubbed against Polly's feet. He put up his soft, gray head for her to stroke.

"You are the nicest kitten that I ever knew," said Polly. "You act as if you had lived here all your life."

Perhaps Gray Pussy said, "I am going to live here all the rest of my life. Come and play tag some more."

And he ran off to his first tree. This time he climbed up, up, up.

"O kitty-cat, kitty-cat, stop!" cried Polly. "You cannot get down."

But kitty-cat did not stop. He climbed out upon a large limb. Then he climbed to another.

He played with the little twigs. He

sharpened his claws in the bark. At last he had stayed in the tree long enough.

He started to walk down the trunk head-first. But that would not do. He tried again and again. He tried from all sides of the tree.

He did not sit down and mew, as some cats do. He kept on trying.

Polly stood under the tree.

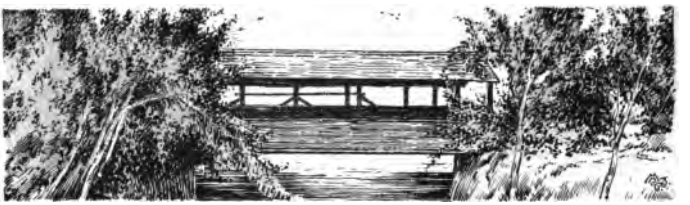
"Turn around, turn around," she cried. "Come down backward. Come down backward. That is the way to do it. Oh, why can't you think of that?"

And at last Gray Pussy did. He turned around and climbed halfway down the trunk backward.

Then he jumped to the ground. He gave a funny little call to Polly. He raced across the grass. He jumped upon the piazza.

There he sat down to watch Polly running after him. She picked him up in her arms. Gray Pussy began to sing her a soft little song.

Perhaps what he sang was this, "You are a good playmate, Polly. But I can beat you climbing trees and playing tag."



FORGET-ME-NOTS

When Peter and Polly go to father's store, they must cross the bridge. Look at the map in the front of your book. You will see that this is so.

The bridge is high above the water. Follow the road on the map until you are opposite the Story Lady's house.

From there one can climb down to the river. But the bank is high and steep. It is really a hill from the street to the river.

Peter and Polly do not often climb down on that side. But sometimes mother lets them.

One afternoon they were standing on the bridge. They were looking at the water.

Polly said, "I see some tin cans. Once you thought that there was silver at the bottom of the river. You asked father to get it out. Do you remember?"

"Yes, I do," said Peter. "And it was the sun that made the tin shine like silver. I wish it had been silver. I should be rich."

"Father got a pearl out of this river," said Polly. "I have seen it. He could have sold it."

"So have I seen it," said Peter. "It came from a clam. When I am bigger, I shall hunt for clams."

"You must learn to swim first. I heard father say so."

"That was last summer, Polly. Perhaps this summer he will teach me to swim. I am big enough.

"I wish I could go down by the river now. Maybe I could find a clam near the shore."

"You can go to the river up above the bridge," said Polly.

"I know it, Polly. But that is not a good place. See the rocks down here. See the sand. This is a better place."

"I see something else," said Polly. "At least I think that I do. Look at the shore near the bend of the river."

"I cannot see anything different," said Peter.

"Well, I think that I can," Polly said. "There is a big spot that is a different color. It looks blue to me. I think it is forget-me-nots."

"What are they, Polly? I never saw any."

"Oh, yes, you have. Mother and I got some down there last year. They are little blue flowers. Some of the buds are a lovely pink. And they have a yellow spot in the middle.

"Mother found pink daisies to put into her bunch. But my bunch was all blue. I am going to ask her if we may go down to the river."

Polly hurried up the hill. Peter waited for her on the bridge.

Soon she came running back. "Yes, we may! Yes, we may!" she shouted.

The two children ran to the place opposite the Story Lady's house. They climbed down the hill to the river.

The grass was growing tall. It hid rocks and holes. But Peter did not fall more than a dozen times.

They came nearer and nearer the spot that Polly had seen. And the spot seemed to grow bluer and bluer.

"They are bluets," cried Peter.

"Oh, no," said Polly. "They are just what I thought. They are forget-me-nots. See how thick they are."

"There are a good many," said Peter. "Do you think that some one planted them? This bed is twice as large as my garden."

"No one planted them," said Polly. "They are wild. Mother told me. I am going to pick all that I want."

RHODA CAMPBELL CHASE

"I will pick, too," said Peter. "But I will hunt for clams first."

Peter did not find any clams. Soon he had finished hunting.

He said to Polly, "I think the water has washed all the clams away."

Polly had picked a bunch of forget-me-nots. Besides, she had wet her feet.

She said, "Forget-me-nots like to grow in wet places. They made me wet my feet."

"So do clams," said Peter. "My feet are wet, too."

"Well, then," said Polly, "hurry up and pick flowers. We must get home soon. Then we can change our shoes.

"After that we will go and hunt for pink daisies. A big bunch of them will look pretty, near our blue forget-me-nots."

"All right," said Peter. "I will pick flowers for you to-day if you will play a game with me to-morrow. That will be Saturday. So you can."

"Yes, I promise," said Polly. "And I shall try to think of some new game for us to play. That will pay you for helping me."

THE PRINCESS OF THE GLASS HILL

"I have found something new to do, Peter," said Polly. "I told you that I would. I found it up at Tim's. Guess what."

"Is it to make something, Polly?"

"No. Guess again."

"Is it about anything we can eat?"

"No. Guess again."

"Is it about something we can do?"

"Of course it is, Peter. I told you that at first. Now guess what we can do."

"Dig a hole to China."

"No. This is something new. We have dug holes."

"I shall not guess any more. If it is new, how can I guess, anyway? You tell me."

"All right," said Polly. "It is something that we can do in the winter. We never

thought that any one could do it in the summer."

"It cannot be sliding downhill," said Peter. "There is no snow."

"But it is, it is!" cried Polly. "I have found a way to slide downhill in the summer. Come up to Tim's. I will show you."

"Is it in a cart? I do not call that sliding."

"No. This is really and truly sliding downhill."

Tim and Collie were playing in the yard.

"Hello, Peter. Hello, Polly," called Tim. "Have you come to play with me?"

"Yes," said Polly. "Tim, let us show Peter where we slid this morning."

"All right," said Tim. "Come on, Peter. It was on the roof of the back barn. See how the hill comes up to the edge of the roof."

"Yes," said Polly. "This side of the roof rests on the ground. Tim, climb up and show Peter how to slide."

Tim climbed upon the roof. It was quite steep. His shoes were slippery. He kept slipping back.

Polly said, "Kneel down and try. That is the way you did this morning."

So Tim got down on his hands and knees. He climbed halfway to the top. Then he turned around. He sat down. He slid to the bottom.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" cried Peter. "I shall try it."

"All right," said Polly. "It cannot hurt you. Go on."

So Peter climbed up on his hands and knees. Then he turned around and slid to the bottom.

"What fun! What fun!" he cried.

"Hear my boots scrape on the shingles."

Soon he and Tim were busy sliding. They did not watch Polly.

When she saw that they were not looking, she climbed to the very top of the barn roof. She put one leg over the other side. Then she called to the boys.

"See me! See me!" she said.

"O Polly!" they cried. "How did you get up so high? We did not see you. Come down, or tell us how to get up."

But Polly said, "I shall not do either. I know magic. So I can walk up the roof.

"Now we will play a game. This roof is a hill made of glass. I am a princess. I live at the top of the hill.

"You must try to get to me. The one

who can climb up here may be the prince of the glass hill."

"How did you do it?" asked Peter again.

"I shall not tell you," said Polly. "You must find out."

Peter said, "Did you go way up there this morning, Tim?"

"No," said Tim. "We couldn't. We slipped. I do not know how she did it. Let's try."

"I know something," said Peter. "We will take off our boots. Then our toes will stick to the shingles better."

Very slowly Peter and Tim crept up toward the top. Often they slipped back a little. But they were careful.

"Wait for me, Peter," said Tim. "I keep slipping. I am tired, too."

"So am I, Tim," said Peter. "But we are nearly there. Come on."

Polly had turned around. Both feet were now on the same side of the roof. She was ready to start sliding down.

Nearer and nearer the boys came. At last each carefully put out a hand. Each took hold of one of Polly's feet.

"We did it, we did it," said Tim.

But Peter said, "I have found you out, Polly. You do not know magic. You can walk up the roof because you have on your rubbers. I shall not let you be a princess. You must slide down the roof with us."

Peter and Tim turned around. Polly let go her hold. Then the three started. Faster and faster they slid.

But a nail caught Tim's stocking. It tore it up the side. And this was the end of the glass-hill game for that day.

When Polly told mother about it, mother made two rules for the game. They were these:

No one must climb quite to the top of the roof. And no one must slide near the ends.

Do you know why she made these rules?

DAISY DOLLS

"Come out and play with the daisies, Peter," said Polly.

"I have not seen any daisies yet, Polly."

"Oh, I have, lots of them. I'll show you."

Polly ran to pick a white daisy. She gave it to Peter.

"Do you see these white things around the yellow center?"

"Yes," said Peter. "I think that they are petals."

"They are not," said Polly. "They are rays. But that is not what I was going to tell you."

"Then what was it?" asked Peter.

"Pull off the white rays, one at a time. You must name each one as you pull it. Then you can tell what you will be when you grow up."

"What shall I name them?"

"Here! I'll show you," said Polly. "Name them this way:

"Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief,
Doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief.

"Now say that over and over until the rays are gone. Here is the last one. It is 'merchant.' So you will be that."

"What is a merchant?" asked Peter. "Maybe I shall not be one."

"Oh, yes, you will, too. The daisy said so. A merchant buys and sells things. Father is one."

"All right," said Peter. "I was going

to be a farmer. But I will keep store with father."

"Here is another daisy," said Polly. "Let us see what your house will be like. Take it and say over and over:

"Little house, big house, ice house, light-house,
Old castle, new castle, henhouse, White House."

So Peter did. Each time that he spoke a name, he pulled out just one of the white rays. At last they were all gone.

"It is done," said Peter. "It stopped on 'White House.' What is that?"

"Oh, did it, Peter? That is where the President lives. I have seen a picture of it. Maybe you will be President some day."

"President of what?" asked Peter.

"President of our country," said Polly.

"Maybe I shall," said Peter. "You may live in the White House with me."

"All right," said Polly. "Now take this daisy. It will tell you what your wife will wear. Say:

"Silk, satin, calico, rags,
Velvet, linen, cotton, bags."

"I do not see how you can wear bags," said Peter.

"Neither do I," said Polly. "Perhaps it will not stop on bags. Then it will not make any difference."

Peter stopped on "rags." He did not like that.

He said, "My wife shall not wear rags. I shall not let her. And I shall not play that game any more. Let's make daisy chains."

"All right," said Polly. "I will get some needles. Wait here for me."

"Bring a spool of thread, too," shouted Peter.

"Of course I will," Polly called back. "How could we string daisies without thread?"

Peter began to pick daisies. He picked just the flowers. He left the stems standing.

When he had picked his hat full, he sat down. He began to string them.

He put the needle through the yellow part of each flower from back to front. Soon he had made a long chain.

Polly did not make hers in that way.

She put her needle through the back of the flowers from side to side.

When it was done, she hung her chain around her neck.

"See mine," she said. "All my daisies lie flat. You can see all their faces."

"It is prettier than mine," said Peter. "How did you think of that way?"

"I don't know, Peter. Let's make more chains like this. Then we will give some to mother."

Mother said, "Thank you, children. Your chains are lovely. Now bring me a few daisies. I will show you what I can do with them."

She took some scissors. She cut the white rays of one so that they looked like this:

Then she took her pen. She made eyes, eyebrows, a nose, and a mouth on the yellow part like this:

How pleased the children were!

"A daisy doll! A daisy doll!" they shouted. And Polly said, "I want to make one."

"Then take your scissors, and your pen

and ink," said mother. "You may make yours out of doors.

"Why don't you make them before you pick the daisies? Then you will have daisy dolls growing in the grass."

"Oh, we will, we will!" shouted Polly. "We will make them just across the road. How funny they will look! We will get a lot made. Then we can show them to father when he comes up from the store."

So off the children ran to make daisy dolls grow by the roadside.

MELTED BUTTERCUPS

It is June. Summer has come again. Some of the fields are white with daisies. Some are yellow with buttercups. Polly does not go to school now.

One morning mother said, "I wish you would all look at the field across the road."

"I noticed it," said father. "It is beautiful."

"What is it, mother?" asked Polly.

"Go and look. Then you will know, I think."

"Oh, I see now, mother. You mean the buttercups, don't you? The whole field is bright yellow. I think that they are lovely."

"I like daisies better," said Peter.

"These do not hurt the hay as daisies do," said father. "They are much brighter, too."

"And, if you have one, you can tell whether people like butter," said Polly. "Did you know that, father?"

"Seems to me I have heard of it, Polly. How do you do it?"

"I will show you, father."

Polly ran out and picked a buttercup. She held it close under Peter's chin.

She said, "See his chin shine. That is a sign that he likes butter."

"Yes, I do," said Peter. "I wish that we could make butter out of buttercups. Just think how much there would be then."

"When I was a little girl, I thought that buttercups were made of gold," said mother.

"Maybe they are," said Peter. "Maybe you can get gold from them. Can you, mother?"

"I never tried, Peter. They are only flowers. That field does look as yellow as gold, doesn't it?"

Peter said, "I know what we can do to-day, Polly. Come out of doors and I will tell you."

"Well," said Polly, "what can we do?"

Peter said, "Polly, I do think buttercups must be made of gold. Let's pick all that we can. Then let's boil them.

"If they have gold in them, the gold will melt out. It will be in the bottom of the kettle.

"Don't you remember about the sap? That boiled down and left maple sirup. Will you?"

"But mother said that we could not get gold from them," said Polly.

"No, she did not, Polly. She said that she had never tried. Maybe no one has ever tried. Will you?"

"Yes, I will, Peter. You picked forget-me-nots for me and I will do this for you. Let's begin now. Maybe we shall be the first to find out about the gold."

So Peter and Polly picked the yellow flowers without the stems. They put them near the side door. At last they had quite a pile.

That afternoon Mrs. Howe went over to see grandmother. Before she went, Polly said to her, "Mother, may we take a kettle?"

"Why, yes, Polly. Which one?"

"The big one, mother. Please put some water in it. Then please set it on the stove. We must have the water boil."

"What are you going to do, Polly?"

"We are going to boil something. It is nothing naughty. Maybe we shall have a nice surprise for you when you come home."

So mother said, "Be careful," and went away.

Peter and Polly filled the kettle with buttercup blossoms. The water was thick with them. Soon they began to boil. At last they had lost their pretty color.

Then Peter said, "Now the gold is melting out of them. It must be in the bottom of the kettle. Feel with your spoon and see."

But when Polly felt, she said, "There is nothing hard on the bottom, Peter."

"Maybe it is soft, yet, like sirup, Polly. See if you can dip any out."

Polly dipped up a spoonful. But it was only soft, greenish stuff. She kept dipping and dipping.

At last she said, "O Peter! I don't believe there is any gold. There is nothing here but old boiled buttercup flowers. Isn't it too bad?"

Peter looked ready to cry. "O Polly!" he said. "Don't you think there will ever be any gold? I did want it so much."

"Don't cry, Peter. Maybe we can get gold some other way. Oh, dear! These old buttercups are burning on the bottom of the kettle.

"The water is boiling away. Help me

quickly! We must take the kettle off the stove."

"No," said Peter. "What is the use of that? Pour in more water. Mother does it when the water boils out of potatoes."

"So she does," said Polly. "Then I will pour in some water. Now let's go out to play."

When mother came home she found the kettle. She guessed what was in it. She guessed why the children had boiled the buttercups.

She knew how disappointed they must be. So she never said a word about her dirty kettle.

MOTHER'S THUNDERSTORM STORY

One day it was very, very hot. Not a breath of air was stirring.

Peter and Polly went to the store on an errand. When they came home, their faces were wet with perspiration.

Peter had a long, black mark on his damp face. That was where he had wiped it with his dirty hand.

They were both so hot that all their clothes seemed to stick to them. You know how uncomfortable that is!

"Polly, I will tie back your curls for you," said mother. "Then you will feel cooler.

"Peter, please go and put some water on your face. That will make you cooler. And it may take off some of the dirt, too."

"Mother," said Polly, "father thinks that we shall have a thunderstorm."

"I think so, too, Polly. And, if it cools

the air, I shall be glad. It is too hot to be comfortable."

"But I shall not be glad, mother. I do not like thunderstorms. I do not like the noise or the lightning. I am almost afraid."

Polly's mother took Polly up in her lap. Then she said, "That is too bad, Polly. The thunder cannot hurt you. Did you think that it could?

"And the lightning is wonderful to watch. It seems to tear holes in the sky for you to peep through.

"Try peeping, the next time we have a storm at night. Then tell me what you saw.

"It is better to peep at night than in the daytime. When it is dark, the lightning looks brighter."

"What shall I see, mother?"

"I cannot tell you, Polly. You may see things which I never saw. Tell Peter about it. Then he can peep, too."

"Oh, there it is, mother. I can hear the thunder. I do not like it. Did you, when you were a little girl?"

"No," said mother. "When I was a little girl I did not like it very well. One summer I went to stay with my Aunt Polly. You were named for her.

"My Aunt Polly was afraid of lightning. When a storm came, she used to shut herself up in a dark closet. Or else she got into a feather bed.

"Then she pulled another feather bed over her. She thought this would keep her safe from the lightning."

"Did it?" asked Polly.

"I do not know," said mother. "At any rate the lightning never hurt her."

"Did you go into a dark closet, mother?"

RHODA CAMPBELL CHASE

"Yes, indeed, Polly. I will tell you the story. When I saw that my Aunt Polly was afraid, I thought I was, too. One day in a hard storm I began to cry and sob.

"I was in the room with Aunt Polly. She was lying between two feather beds. She heard me crying.

"She said to me, 'What is the matter?'

"'I am so frightened,' I said.

"'Poor child,' said my Aunt Polly. 'You will be quite safe if you will go into my closet. But it is very hot.'"

"Was it dark, too, mother?" asked little Polly.

"Oh, yes," said mother. "There was not a bit of light. And it was very hot. I had never before been in such a still, hot place.

"I sat down on the floor. I could not hear the thunder. I was glad of that. I could not see the lightning. I was glad of that. But I was so hot!

"After a while I went to sleep. I do not know how long I slept. When I awoke, it was hotter than ever. I could not seem to breathe very well.

"I thought that the storm must be over.

So I tried to open the door. The latch was broken on the inside, and I could not.

"Then I rapped on the door and called. I hoped that Aunt Polly would hear me. But she did not. No one did.

"The worst of the storm was over, as I thought. So Aunt Polly had gone downstairs. She had forgotten me.

"Then I began to grow really frightened. I kicked and pounded on the door. I screamed. Still no one came.

"It seemed to me that I had been in the closet for days. I said to myself, 'What if I never get out? What if I starve here?'

"I forgot that they would remember me at supper time. I grew more and more frightened.

"I said to myself, 'I am really frightened now. I was not really afraid of the lightning. If I could only see some this minute, how glad I should be.'

"Then I began to pound on the door again. I thought, 'How silly I was to think that I was afraid of the thunder and the lightning. I shall not be afraid of anything, if I can only get out.'

"At last, after a long, long time, I heard

some one come into my Aunt Polly's room. Some one opened the closet door.

"Out I tumbled in a heap. My Aunt Polly picked me up.

"'You blessed child,' she said. 'I forgot you. I am so sorry. See, the storm is nearly over.'

"'Yes,' I said, 'but isn't there just a little lightning left? I want to see a little.'

"'Go to the front door then,' said my Aunt Polly. 'I thought that you were afraid of it.'

"'I am not now,' I said. 'I am not afraid of anything but getting caught in a dark closet.' And I went to the door to look at the lightning.

"The storm had gone past us. But I could still see flashes. They looked very beautiful to me.

"From that day to this, I have not been afraid of a thunderstorm.

"I never told my Aunt Polly how frightened I was in the closet. But that is one reason why you were never punished by being shut up."

Little Polly drew a deep breath.

"Is that all?" she asked. "I liked that story. I see now that the lightning can look beautiful. I will watch it. And, if I am afraid again, you may shut me into a dark closet to cure me."

THE SHINY LAND

Polly told Peter mother's thunderstorm story.

Peter said, "Are you going to be afraid any more?"

"No," said Polly. "I am not. I was not much afraid anyway."

"I am glad," said Peter. "Tim and I are not afraid. We like the noise. It is better than Fourth of July.

"We like the lightning, too. It is brighter than a bonfire. We wish that we could stay out of doors in one storm. Would you stay with us?"

"Yes, I would, Peter, if mother would let us."

"I am sure that she would," said Peter. "Didn't she tell you to watch the lightning at night? You can see it better out of doors."

Sometime after this there came another thunderstorm. It was in the night. The thunder was so loud that it wakened Peter.

He got out of bed. He ran to the window. The lightning was very bright. Each flash made night as light as day. It had not begun to rain.

"Oh, if I were only out of doors," Peter said to himself. "What if I should go! Polly said that she would, too."

He ran softly into Polly's room. She was sitting up in bed.

"Are you afraid?" asked Peter.

"I am not sure," said Polly.

"Get up and come out with me," said Peter. "Then you can tell whether you are afraid. If you are, Tim and I shall not like it."

"All right," said Polly. "I will."

Down the front stairs they ran. Their bare feet made no noise. Father and mother did not hear them. Perhaps the thunder was too loud for that.

Polly then opened the front door. It was unlocked. They stepped down upon the grass.

The thunder was banging. The lightning was flashing.

"Have you found out?" shouted Peter.

"Found out what?" shouted Polly.

"Are you afraid?"

"No," called Polly. "I am not afraid. I like it. It makes me wish to jump up and down, and run."

"Let's run up the hill then," said Peter. "Maybe Tim will come out."

"Of course he will not," said Polly. "But we will do it, just the same. Look

out for your toes. Don't stub them. It would hurt."

Up the hill they ran. Past Tim's house and on. At last Polly stopped.

"Night clothes are easy to run in, aren't they? But I have lost my breath. We must stop."

"So have I," said Peter. "Let's watch the lightning."

The lightning seemed to split the sky.

"What is in through the holes?" cried Polly. "Can you see?"

"I do not know," said Peter. "I cannot see. It is a shiny place. That is all I can see."

"Then that is what it is. It is the Shiny Land, the Shiny Land!" shouted Polly, jumping up and down.

"And the Shiny Land is where all the fairies have gone to live. The Story Lady said so. We have found it!"

"Will they peep down through those holes?" cried Peter. "Will they see us?"

"Maybe," said Polly. "Watch."

The wind had begun to blow. Just at that minute came the first big drops of rain.

Peter and Polly started to run down the

hill. Before they were at Tim's house, it was pouring. Before they were home, they were soaking wet.

Their house was lighted. Father was just coming out with his raincoat on. Peter and Polly ran into the yard.

"Quick!" called mother. "Run to the kitchen door!"

There, in the warm kitchen, she took off Polly's wet night clothes. She rubbed her dry.

Father took Peter to the bathroom. He rubbed Peter dry.

Then father made a fire in the fireplace.

Peter and Polly sat in front of it and dried their hair.

"Now, children," said mother, "tell us about it. We should have been frightened if we had not seen you go.

"We had not gone to bed. We were out under the elms watching the storm come."

"I wished to see if Polly was afraid," said Peter.

"And I am not," said Polly. "I like it all. I shall never have to be shut up in that dark closet. And, O mother! We peeped through!"

"What did you see?" asked mother.

"The Shiny Land, the Shiny Land!" cried Polly. "That is where all the fairies live now. Did you ever see it, mother?"

"No, Polly," said mother. "I never did. Children can see things that grown-ups cannot.

"Now we will go upstairs to bed again. And please tell us the next time you go out for a run in the dark. We might be frightened."

"Yes," said father. "Remember that you must think of mother and father, as well as of Peter and Polly."

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